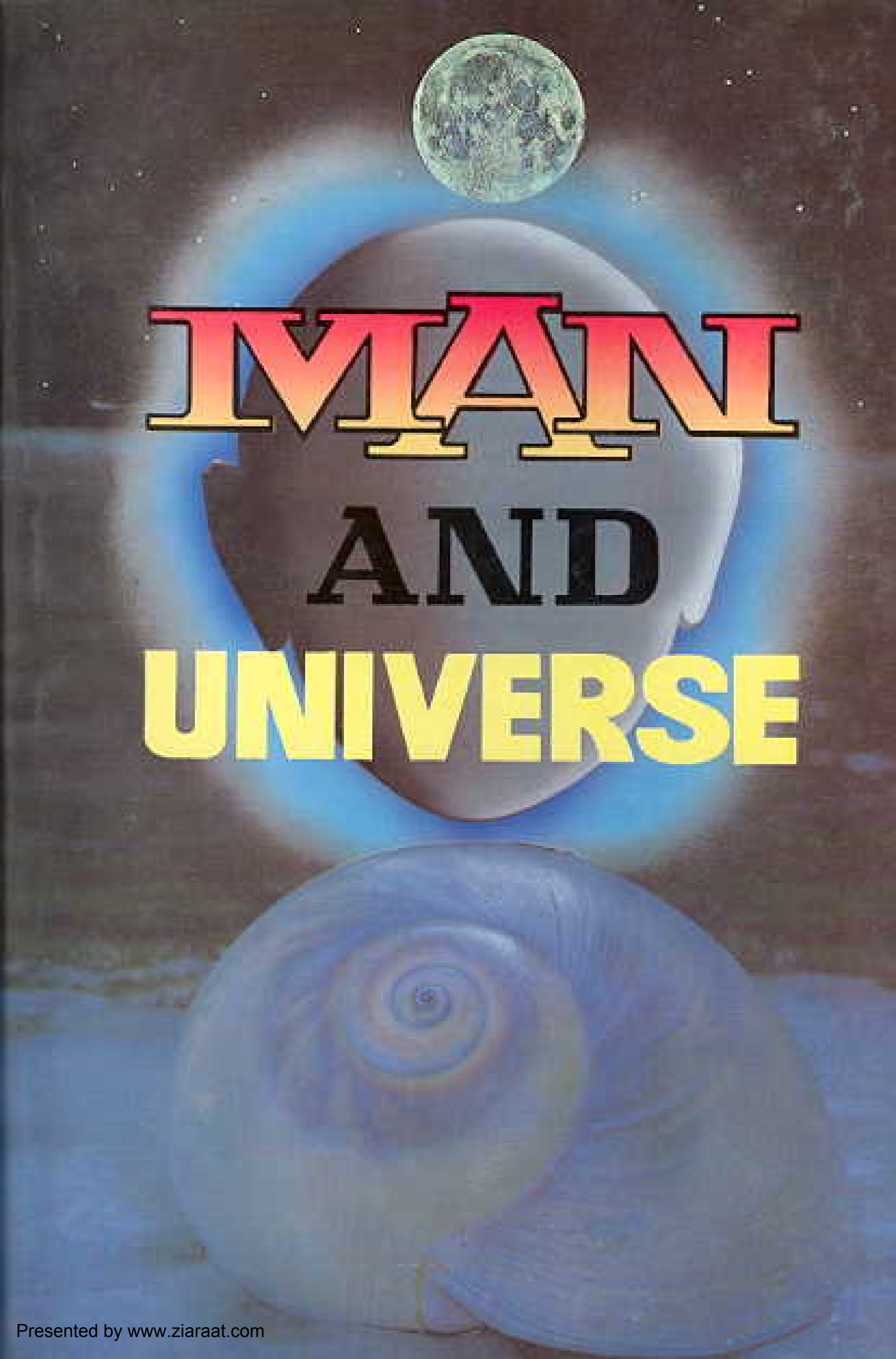
MAN AND UNIVERSE



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Man and Animals

Man himself being a kind of animal, has many things in common with other animals. At the same time he has many dissimilarities which distinguish him from other animals and make him superior to them.

The main and basic features distinguishing man from other living beings, on which his humanity depends and which constitute the source of what is known as human culture, pertain to two spheres: attitudes and inclinations.

Generally speaking the animals are endowed with a quality of perceiving and knowing themselves and the outer world, and in the light of this knowledge they strive to secure what they want and desire.

Like other animals man also has many wants and desires and in the light of what he knows and understands, he makes efforts to secure and realize them. Man differs from other living beings in that he knows more, understands better and his wants and desires are of a higher level.

This characteristic of man distinguishes him from all other animals and makes him superior to them.

Awareness and Desire in Animals

An animal knows the world through its external senses only. That is why, firstly, its knowledge is superficial and seeming. It does not penetrate the things and has no access to their internal relations. Secondly, it is partial and particular, and is neither universal nor general. Thirdly, it is regional, for it is confined to the living environment of the animal, and does not go beyond that. Fourthly, it is limited to the present and is unconcerned with the past and the future. As animal is not aware of its own or world's history, it neither thinks of the future nor does it plan for it.

From the viewpoint of knowledge, an animal cannot come out of the framework of the exteriors, the particularity, the living environment and the present time. It never escapes from these four prisons. If by chance it does, it does so instinctively and unconsciously, and not by

its own choice and will.

Like the range of its knowledge, the level of the wants and the desires of an animal also has a limited scope. Firstly, all its desires are material and do not go beyond the limits of eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, mating and building a home or a nest. For an animal there is no question of any spiritual needs, moral values etc. Secondly, all its desires are personal and individualistic, pertaining to the animal itself or, at the most, to its mate and the young ones. Thirdly, they are regional related to its living environment only. Fourthly, they are instantaneous, pertaining to the present time.

In other words, the dimension of the desires and inclinations of an animal's existence has the same limitations as the dimension of its perceptive existence. From this point of view also, an animal has to live within specific limitations.

If an animal pursues an objective which is outside these limitations and which, for an example, pertains to its species in general and not to one individual or pertains to the future and not to the present, as is observed in the case of certain gregarious animals like bees, it does so unconsciously, instinctively and by the direct order of the power which has created it and which manages the whole world.

Awareness and Desire in Man

Man's domain both in the sphere of his knowledge, information and outlook and in the sphere of his desires, wants and inclinations is very vast and lofty. Man's knowledge passes from the exterior of the things to their inner reality, their mutual relations and to the laws governing them. His knowledge does not remain confined to any particular place or time. It surpasses all such limitations.

On the one hand, his knowledge extends to the events which took place before his birth, and on the other, it extends to other planets and stars. He gets acquainted with his past as Well as his future. He discovers his own history and that of the World, that is the history of the earth, the sky, the mountains, the rivers, the plants and the living organisms. Not only he thinks of the remote future, but also applies his thought to infinities and eternities, some of which he recognizes. Man goes a step further from identifying the individuality and particularity, and with a view to control nature, discovers universal rules and general truths prevailing in the world.

From the viewpoint of his ambitions and aspirations also man holds an outstanding position, for he is an aspiring, high thinking and idealistic being. He seeks objectives which are not of material and profitable nature; objectives which are in the interest of entire humanity and not confined to himself and his family or to any particular region or to a particular period of time.

Man is so idealistic that he often gives more importance to his creed and ideology than to any other value. He may consider service to others to be of more consequence than his own welfare, and may regard a thorn stuck into the foot of someone else as being stuck into his own foot or even his own eye. He feels sympathy with others and shares their joy and grief. Man becomes so devoted to his creed and sacred ideology that he easily sacrifices his life for them.

The human aspect of the human culture which is considered to be its true spirit is the outcome of such feelings and desires.

Basis of the Distinction of Man

Man's vast and extensive conception of the world is a product of the collective human effort made through so many centuries. The information so acquired has been piled together and developed. This information after it has been processed and regulated has come to be known as "science" in the wider sense of the term, that is the sum-total of human ideas about the cosmos. It includes philosophy, a product of the collective human effort which has been given a special logical form.

Spiritual and higher human tendencies are born of man's belief in certain realities of this world and his devotion to them. These realities are neither individualistic nor material. They are comprehensive and general involving no question of any economic gain, and are in their turn the outcome of certain conceptions of the world either presented to mankind by the Divine Prophets or produced by a sort of idealistic thinking initiated by some philosophers.

In any case the higher spiritual and super-animal tendencies of man if based on a doctrinal and intellectual infrastructure take the name of faith.

Hence we come to the conclusion that knowledge and faith constitute the main and the basic difference between man and other living beings and that knowledge and faith form the basis of man's humanity which depends on them.

Much has been said on the distinction between man and other species of animals. Some hold that there is no basic difference between the two. According to them the difference of knowledge is that of quantity or at the most of quality, but not that of essence. They attach little importance to man's vast, wonderful and marvellous achievements in the field of knowledge, which have attracted the attention of the great philosophers of the East and the West.

This group of scholars maintains that from the point of view of his wants and desires man is no more than an animal.[1] Some others believe that the main difference is that of life. Man is the only fully living animal. Other animals have no feelings, and are not conscious of pleasure

and pain. They are just semi-living machines. Therefore the true definition of man is that he is the living being. [2] Other thinkers do not believe that, and maintain that there are basic differences between other living beings and man. It appears that each group of these scholars has concentrated on one human characteristic and distinction. That is why man has been defined in so many different ways. He has been described as a rational animal, an absolute-seeking being, an unending being, an idealist, a seeker of values, a metaphysical animal, an insatiable being, an indefinite being, a responsible being, a forward-looking being, a free agent, an insurgent, a social order loving being, a beauty-loving being, a justice-loving being, a double-faced being, an amorous being, an obligated being, an intuitive being, a being believing in double standard, a creator, a lonely being, an agitated being, a fundamentalist, doctrinaire, a tool-maker, a supernaturalist, an imaginative being, a spiritualist, a transcendentalist etc.

Obviously each of these descriptions is true in itself, but if we want to find out an expression inclusive of all the basic distinctions, then we should say that man is an animal endowed with knowledge and faith.

Is Humanity a Superstructure?

We know that man is a sort of animal. He has many things in common with other animals. But he has many distinctive features also.

Because of his similarities and dissimilarities with other animals man has a double life; an animal life and a human life, or in other words, a material life and a cultural life.

Here a question arises: What is the relation between man's humanity and his animality, his human life and his animal life? Is one of these qualities of primary importance and the other of only secondary? Is one of these the basis and the other only a reflection of it? Is one of these the infrastructure and the other the superstructure? Is the material life the infrastructure and the cultural life the superstructure? Is the animality of man the infrastructure and the cultural life the superstructure? Is the animality of man the infrastructure and his humanity the superstructure?

This question nowadays is initiated from a sociological and not psychological point of view. That is why the discussion centres round the point whether among the social characteristics of man, his economic tendencies related to production and productional relations are more important than all other characteristics of his, especially those which reflect his humanity, and whether his other characteristics and tendencies are only a superstructure of his economic nature? Another interconnected question is whether it is true that science, philosophy, literature, religion, law, ethics and art of every age are only a manifestation of the economic relations of that age and have no intrinsic value of their own?

Though this question is initiated from a sociological point of view, its discussion inevitably leads to a psychological result and a philosophical discussion of the nature of man known in modern terms as humanism. Generally the conclusion drawn is that humanity of man is of no importance. What is important is his animality only. In other words the view of those who deny the existence of any basic difference between man and animal is supported.

This theory not only denies the importance of human tendencies towards realism, virtue, beauty and belief in Allah, but also denies the importance of man's rational approach to the world and truth. It may be pointed out that no approach can be neutral. Every approach inevitably represents a certain material outlook.

It is surprising that some of the schools that support the theory that man is basically an animal, simultaneously talk of humanity and humanism also!

The fact is that the evolutionary march of man begins from his animality and proceeds towards the highest point of humanity. This principle applies to individuals as well as to society. In the beginning of his existence man is no more than a material organism. With a basic evolutionary movement he is changed into a spiritual substance. Human spirit is born in the lap of human body and then attains independence. Animality of man is the nest in which his humanity develops and matures. It is a characteristic of evolution that the more a developing being evolves, the more that being becomes independent, self-existing and effective and the more it influences its environment. As the humanity of man develops, it makes an advance towards independence and gains control of all other aspects. This is true both in the case of an individual and that of a society. A developed individual controls both his internal and external environment. His development means that he has been emancipated from the subjection of internal and external environment and attached to creed and faith.

Evolution of society takes place exactly in the same way as the evolution of soul in the lap of body and the evolution of the humanity of an individual in the lap of his animality.

The development of society mostly begins under the impact of its economic organizations. The cultural and spiritual aspects of society are tantamount to its soul. As the effect of body and soul is reciprocal, there is a similar mutual relationship between spiritual and material arrangements also. Just as the evolutionary progress of an individual means his march towards freedom, independence and greater supremacy of soul, the evolutionary progress of a society also means the same thing. In other words, the more a human society is developed, the more its cultural life becomes independent of its material life. The man of future will be a man of culture and a man of faith, creed and ideology and not a man of economy, bodily needs and sensual enjoyments.

Of course all this does not mean that human society necessarily advances along a straight line towards the perfection of human values, nor does it mean that at every stage of time it is one

step advanced further than it was at the previous stage of time. It is possible that mankind passes through a stage of social life in which despite all technical and technological advancement it is pushed a stage or two backward from spiritual and moral point of view, as is alleged to be the case with the man of our century.

Actually man on the whole is marching forward both from material and spiritual points of view. But his spiritual movement is not regular along a straight line. It is a movement which involves occasional stoppages, retrogressions and deviations to the right and to the left. Nevertheless it is on the whole an evolutionary and forward movement. That is why we say that the man of future will be a man of culture and not a man of economy and the man of future will be a man of faith, creed and ideology and not a man of bodily needs and sensual enjoyments.

According to this theory the human aspects of man because of their fundamentality, developed along with and even prior to the development of the production implements. Consequent upon their development the human aspects have gradually reduced man's dependence on his natural and social environment and have diminished his amenability to the environmental conditions. The freedom so obtained enhanced man's attachment to faith and ideology and added to his capacity of influencing his natural and social environment. In future as a result of gaining complete independence, man will become more attached and devoted to faith and ideology.

As in the past man was less equipped with the gifts of nature and was not capable of fully utilizing his own faculties, he was a captive of nature and his own animality. But in future man will be able to exploit better the gifts of nature and his own inherent capabilities. Thus to a great extent he will be liberated from the captivity of nature and his own animal tendencies and will add to his sway over nature and himself.

According to this view though man's human reality emerges along with and in the lap of his material and animal evolution, it is in no way the reflection of and subservient to his material development. It is an independent and progressive reality. Though it is affected by material aspect, it influences them also. What determines the final destiny of man is his cultural evolution and his human reality, not the evolutionary progress of the production implements. It is human reality which in the course of its progress causes the development of the production implements along with the development of other human affairs. It is not true that production implements develop automatically and that humanity of man changes with a change in the tools directing production system.

Notes:

[1] That is what the English philosopher Thomas Hobbs maintains.

[2] Well-known theory of Descartes

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Knowledge and Faith

Relation Between Knowledge and Faith

We have studied the relation between man's humanity and his animality, in other words, the relation between man's cultural and spiritual life and his material life. It is now clear that man's humanity has an independent existence and is not a mere reflection of his animal life.

It is also clear that knowledge and faith are the two basic parts of the humanity of man. Now let us see what mutual relation these two facets of humanity have or can have.

Unfortunately certain parts of the Old Testament have in the Christian world created an idea of contradiction between knowledge and faith. This idea which has cost dearly to knowledge and faith both has its root in the Book of Genesis of the Old Testament.

Narrating the story of Adam and the Forbidden Tree, the Book of Genesis, Chapter II, verses 16 and 17 says:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die".

In the Chapter III, verses 1 - 7 it says:

"Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons".

In the verse 22 - 23 of the same chapter it says:

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: "[3]

According to this conception of man, God, knowledge and disobedience, God wants that man should not be aware of good and evil. The Forbidden Tree is the tree of knowledge. Man attains knowledge only if he rebels against God's command (disobeys the teachings of religion and the Prophets), but for that very reason he is driven out of God's Heaven.

On the basis of this conception all evil insinuations are those of knowledge, and reason is the insinuating Devil.

In contrast, we learn from the Holy Quran that Allah taught all names (realities) to Adam and then ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before him. The Devil was condemned because he refused to prostrate himself before the vicegerent of Allah, who was aware of the realities. The Prophetic traditions have told us that the Forbidden Tree was that of avarice, greed and such like things, that is the things related to the animality of Adam, not to his humanity. The insinuating Devil always insinuates what is against reason and what answers the base desires. It is concupiscence and not reason that represents the Devil within man. Contrary to all this what we find in the Book of Genesis is really very amazing.

It is this conception which has divided the European history of culture during the past 1500 years into two distinct periods, namely the age of faith and the age of science, and has placed science and faith in opposition to each other.

In contrast the Islamic history of culture is divided into the period of advancement of knowledge and faith and the period in which both of them declined together. We Muslims should keep ourselves away from the wrong conception which has caused an irreparable loss to knowledge, faith and humanity, and must not blindly regard the contradiction between knowledge and faith as an indisputable fact.

We now propose to make an analytical study of this question and see whether each of these two facets of humanity exclusively belongs to a distinct period or age, and whether man in

every age is condemned to be only a semi-man and always to suffer the evils ensuing either from ignorance or from infidelity.

As you will see every faith is inevitably based on a particular way of thinking and a special conception of cosmos. There is no doubt that many conceptions and interpretations of the world, though they may be the basis of a faith, are not acceptable because they are not in consonance with rational and scientific principles. Therefore the question is whether there exists any conception of the world and interpretation of life which is rational and at the same time fit to be the infrastructure of a felicitous faith.

If it is found that such a conception does exist, then there is no reason why man should be supposed to be condemned for ever to suffer the evils ensuing either from ignorance or infidelity. The relation between knowledge and faith can be discussed from two angles. One of them is to see whether there exists a faith, producing conception which arouses faith and is rational too, or all the ideas which are scientific are contrary to faith, give no hope and produce no optimism. We will discuss this question later under the heading, **Conception of Cosmos.**

The second angle from which we can discuss the relation between faith and knowledge is the question as to how each of these two affects man. Does knowledge draw us to one thing and faith to something contradictory to that? Does knowledge want to mould us in one way and faith in another? Or do faith and knowledge supplement each other, taking part in making harmonious whole of us? Let us see what knowledge gives us and what faith gives.

Knowledge gives us light and power; faith gives us love, hope and warmth. Knowledge helps make implements and appliances and accelerates progress; faith determines the purpose of human efforts and gives direction to them. Knowledge brings about outer revolution; faith causes inner revolution. Knowledge makes the world man's world; faith makes life the life of humanity. Knowledge expands the existence of man horizontally; faith lifts it up vertically. Knowledge trains man's temperament; faith reforms man. Both knowledge and faith give power to man; but the power given by faith is continuous, whereas the power given by knowledge is disjointed. Knowledge is beauty; faith is beauty too. But knowledge beautifies reason and thought; faith beautifies spirit and feeling. Both knowledge and faith give man security. But knowledge provides outer security, whereas faith provides inner security. Knowledge gives protection against diseases, floods, earthquakes and storms. Faith provides security against restlessness, loneliness, sense of insecurity and low thinking. Knowledge harmonizes the world with man, faith harmonizes man with himself.

The need of man to both knowledge and faith has attracted the attention of religious as well as secular thinkers.

Dr Muhammad Iqbal says:

"Humanity needs three things today, a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.

Modern Europe has, no doubt, built a realistic system on these lines, but experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced man while religion has always elevated individuals and transformed the societies. The idealism of Europe never became a living factor in her life and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction, for which even the least enlightened man among us can lay down his life". (Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam).

Will Durant, the well-known author of the History of Civilization, despite his being a non-religious man, says:

"The ancient world differed from the new machine world only in means, not in aims. What will you say if it is found that all our progress consists in the improvement of methods and means and not in the betterment of the aims and goals?"[4]

He also says, "Wealth is boring; reason and wisdom are only a cold dim light. It is only love which with indescribable tenderness warms the hearts".[5]

It is now more or less realized that scienticism or pure scientific training is not to make a full man. It can produce a semi-man not a full-fledged one. This training turns out raw material of man, not a finished man. It can produce a strong, healthy and the unilateral man but not a virtuous and multilateral being. It is now recognized by all that the period of pure science has now come to an end. Society is now threatened with an idealistic vacuum. Some people want to fill this vacuum with pure philosophy and some others are seeking the help of literature, art and humanitarian sciences for this purpose.

In our country also there is a suggestion to fill the gap with humanizing literature, especially the mystic literature as produced by Mowlawi, Sa'di and Hafiz. The proponents of this scheme forget that this literature itself has been inspired by religion and its humanizing spirit, which has made it attractive, is Islamic. Otherwise how is it that some modern literature in spite of its loud claim of being humanistic, is so insipid, and lacking in spirit and attractiveness. In fact the human content of our mystic literature is the result of its Islamic conception of the universe and man. If we take the Islamic spirit out of these masterpieces,

nothing but a carcass of them will be left.

Will Durant is one of those who realizes the existence of vacuum. He suggests that literature, philosophy and art should fill the gap. He says: "The damage done to our schools and colleges is mostly due to the education theory of Spencer,[6] who has defined education as bringing man in harmony with his environment. This definition is lifeless and mechanical, and it stems from the philosophy of the superiority of mechanics. Every creative spirit and brain is averse to it. The result is that our schools and colleges have been filled with theoretical and mechanical sciences and have remained devoid of such subjects as literature, history, philosophy and art, which are being considered to be useless. An education which is purely scientific, can produce nothing except tools. It alienates man from beauty and estranges; him from wisdom. It would have been better for the world if Spencer had not written a book". [7]

It is very surprising that though Will Durant admits that this vacuum is in the first place an idealistic one, resulting from a sort, of wrong thinking and lack of faith in human aims and goals, he is still of the opinion that the problem can be solved by anything non-material though it may be merely imaginative. He thinks that occupation with history, art, beauty, poetry and music can fill a vacuum originating from the depths of man's instinct of looking for an ideal and seeking perfection.

Can Knowledge and Faith Take the Place of Each Other?

We have learnt that there is no contradiction between faith and knowledge. They rather supplement each other. Now there arises one more question: Is it possible that they fill the place of each other?

This question need not be answered elaborately for we already know the respective roles of faith and knowledge. It is evident that knowledge cannot take the place of faith which gives love and hope besides light and power. Faith elevates our desires, and in addition to helping us in realizing our aims and objects, removes the element of selfishness and individualism from our desires and ideals and puts them on the basis of love and spiritual and moral relations. Besides being a tool in our hands, it basically changes our essence. Similarly faith also cannot fill the place of knowledge, which makes us familiar with nature, reveals its laws to us and makes us aware of ourselves.

Historical experience has shown that separation between knowledge and faith has caused irreparable losses. Faith should .be identified in the light of knowledge, which saves it from being mixed up with myths. Faith without knowledge ends in ,stagnation and blind prejudice, and can achieve no purpose. Where there is no knowledge, faith of the believer becomes a tool in the hands of the clever hypocrites. We saw an example , of this contingency in the case of the Khawarij (Kharijites) of the early Islamic era. Other examples in various forms we have seen in later periods and are still seeing.

Knowledge without faith is a sharp sword in the hand of a drunken brute. It is a lamp in the hand of a thief to help him pick up the best articles at midnight. That is why there is not the least difference in the nature and conduct of the faithless man of today who has knowledge and the faithless man of yesterday who had no knowledge. After all what is the difference between the Churchills, Johnsons, Nixons and Stalins of today and the Pharaohs, Genghis Khans and Attilas of yore?

It may be said that as knowledge is light as well as power, it has no special and exclusive application to the external world. It illuminates our internal world also and consequently gives us power to change it. Therefore knowledge can make the world and man both. It can perform its own task, that is world-making as well as the task of belief, that is man making. The answer is that all this is true, but the basic point is that knowledge is a sort of implement and its use depends on the will of man. Whatever man does, he can do that in a better way with the help of knowledge. That is why we say that knowledge is helpful in securing objectives and traversing the path man chooses for himself.

It is obvious that implements are used for achieving a predetermined goal. Now the question is on what basis the goal should be determined?

As we know, by nature man is an animal. Humanity is his acquired quality. In other words, human talents of man are to be nurtured and promoted gradually in the light of faith. By his nature man moves towards his animal and selfish objectives which are material and individualistic. He employs the implements available to him for this purpose. Hence he is in need of a separate driving force which may neither be his objective nor his tool. He needs a force which may explode him from within and put his hidden talents into action. He requires a force which may bring about a revolution in his conscience and give him a new orientation. This task cannot be performed by discovery and knowledge of the laws governing man and nature. The performance of this task is possible only if the sanctity and importance of certain values are embedded in the soul of man. For this purpose man must have a number of noble tendencies ensuing from a particular way of thinking and certain conceptions of the universe and man. These conceptions and the contents of their dimensions and proofs cannot be made available in any laboratory, and, as we shall explain, are out of the reach of science.

The past and present history has shown what evil consequences the dissociation of knowledge and faith from each other has produced. Where there was faith but no knowledge, the efforts of the humanitarian people were directed to the matters which either were not much fruitful or did not produce good results. These efforts were often the source of prejudices and obscurantism, and occasionally resulted in harmful conflicts.

Where there has been knowledge but faith has been lacking, as in the case of some modern societies, the entire force of knowledge has been used to serve the cause of self-aggrandizement, amassing wealth, and satisfying the lust of power, exploitation, subjugation

and craftiness.

The past two or three centuries may be regarded as the period of attaching too much importance to scientific knowledge and ignoring faith. Many intellectuals thought that all human problems would be solved by science, but experience has proved the contrary. Today there is no intellectual denying that man needs some sort of faith. Even if that faith is not religious, it is bound to be ultra-scientific. Bertrand Russell has materialistic outlook, yet he admits that: "The work that merely aims at earning income shall not produce good results. For this purpose one should adopt a profession that implants in the individual a faith, a purpose and a goal".[8]

Today the materialists feel compelled to claim that they are philosophically materialists and morally idealists. In other words they say that they are materialists from theoretical point of view and spiritualists from practical and idealistic point of view. Anyhow, the problem remains as to how it is possible that a man should be a materialist theoretically and a spiritualist practically? The materialists themselves should answer this question.

George Sarton, the world famous scientist and the author of the well-known book, History of Science, describing the inability of science to humanize the mutual relations of mankind and underlining man's urgent need of the force of faith, says: "In certain fields science has made wonderful progress. But in other fields related to the mutual relations of human beings, for example the fields of national and international politics, we are still laughing at ourselves".

George Sarton admits that the faith man needs is a religious faith. He says this of man's need for the triad of art, religion, and science: "Art reveals beauty; it is the joy of life. Religion means love; it is the music of life. Science means truth and reason; it is the conscience of mankind. We need all of them art and religion as well as science. Science is absolutely necessary but it is never sufficient". (George Sarton, Six Wings: Men of Science in the Renaissance, p. 218. (London, 1958).

[3] Extracts from The Holy Bible, AD 1611. The British and Foreign Bible Society London.

[4] The Pleasures of Philosophy pp. 240

[5] The Pleasures of Philosophy pp. 114 (New York, 1953).

[6] Celebrated English philosopher of the 19th century.

[7] The Pleasures of Philosophy, pp. 168, 169 (New York, 1953)

[8] Bertrand Russell, Marriage and Morals, p. 102. (London 1929)

Chapter 2

Religious Faith

The foregoing discussion has made it clear that without having an ideal and faith man cannot pass a healthy life nor can he render a fruitful service to humanity and human culture. A man not having an ideal and faith will either be submerged in self-seeking or will be converted into a lifeless robot groping in darkness and not knowing his duty in respect of the moral and social questions of life. He will perforce show queer reaction to such questions. A man who adheres to a school, an ideology or faith, knows his responsibility clearly. But a man whose responsibility is not made clear by a school or a system, will pass his life in bewilderment and will sometimes be drawn to this direction and sometimes to that. He will become an incongruous being. In, fact there cannot be two opinions about the necessity of being attached to a definite school or an ideology.

It is important to note that it is religious faith alone that can convert a man into a true believer and can suppress his selfishness and self-seeking under the impact of a doctrine and an ideology. Religious faith creates in the individual a sort of unqualified submission so that he can no longer entertain any doubt even about the most trivial doctrines of his school. He holds his school dear to his heart, regards his life without it as meaningless and absurd and supports his ideology with zeal and fervour.

Distinctions of Religious Faith

Religious tendencies impel man to make efforts even at the cost of his natural and individualistic feelings. He sometimes sacrifices his life and his social position for the sake of his faith.

This is possible only when the ideal of a man attains an aspect of sanctity and gains absolute control of his existence. It is religious force alone which imparts sanctity to an ideal and imposes its authority on man.

It is true that often people sacrifice their life, their property and all that is dear to them not for the sake of any ideal or religious faith but under the pressure of psychological complexes, malice, revenge or as a severe reaction to the feeling of being oppressed and suppressed. Such cases are common in every part of the world.

But there is a difference between a religious and a non-religious ideal. As the involvement of religious belief imparts sanctity to an ideal, sacrifices are made for the sake of it most voluntarily and naturally. A task performed voluntarily shows a sort of choice, but a task performed under the influence of complexes and perturbing inner pressures, means a sort of explosion. Evidently there is a vast difference between the two.

Furthermore, should the world conception of a man be purely material and based exclusively on perceptible realities, he will find every kind of social and human idealism contrary to the perceptible realities of his relations with the world as felt by him on any particular occasion.

The American psychologist and philosopher of the early 20th century, William James says: "The outcome of a perceptional conception is only selfishness, not idealism. Idealization will not go beyond the limits of fantasy if it is not based on a world conception whose logical result is the ideal in question. Man should make a world of his own ideas, consisting of the realities existing within himself, and live with it happily. Anyhow, if idealism stems from a religious belief, it will be based on a conception of the world, the logical result of which will be the espousal of social ideals. Religious faith is a sort of friendly relationship between man and the world, or in other words, a sort of harmony between man and universal ideals. In contrast, non-religious beliefs and ideals are a sort of breaking away from the external world and building an imaginary world which in no way finds any support from the former".

Religious belief not only prescribes for man a number of duties irrespective of his natural inclinations, but also completely changes his view about the world, in the structure of which he begins to discern new elements. The dry, cold, mechanical and material world is transformed into a living and conscious world. Religious belief changes man's impression about the universe and the creation. William James says: "The world which the religious thinking presents to us is not only this very material world in a changed form but also includes many features of which a materialist cannot think". (*Psychoanalysis and Religion* p. 508)

Besides all this, every human being has an innate tendency to believe in truth and sacred and adorable realities. Man has many hidden capabilities ready to be fostered and promoted. All his inclinations are not material. He has spiritual tendencies so which are innate and not acquired. This is a fact which is supported by science.

William James has said: "Let any number of our motives and incentives have their source in this world, but as most of our desires and inclinations are not in keeping with any material calculations, it is evident that they spring from the metaphysical world". (*Psychoanalysis and Religion*, p. 508. New York, 1929)

As spiritual inclinations do exist, they should be fostered and fostered well and carefully. Otherwise they are likely to deviate from the right course and cause irreparable loss.

Another psychologist, Erich Fromm says: "There is none who is not in need of a religion and does not want limits for his orientation and a subject for his pastime. A man himself may not distinguish between his religious and non-religious beliefs and may believe that he has no religion. He may regard, his attachment to the apparently non-religious objectives, such as wealth, power or success as simply a sign of his interest in practical affairs and a pursuit of his own welfare. The question is not ,whether a man has or has not a religion. The question is what religion he has". (*Psychoanalysis and Religion*, p. 508)

What this psychologist means is that a man cannot live without hallowing and adoring something. If he does not acknowledge and worship only Allah, he is bound to recognize something else as a supreme reality and to make it the object of his faith and worship.

As man is in need of an ideal and a faith and by his instinct seeks something which he may hallow and adore, the only way open to us is to augment our religious faith, which is the only faith which can really bring man under its sway.

The Holy Qur'an is the first Book which has described religious faith as a sort of concord between man and the entire creation:

"Do they seek anything other than the religion of Allah? But to Him submits whosoever is in the heavens and the earth." (Surah Al-e-Imran, 3:83)

The Holy Qur'an has also described religious faith as a part of the innate nature of man:

"Be devoted to the upright religion. That is the nature in which Allah has created man." (Surah ar-Rum, 30:30)

Effects and Advantages of Faith

We have already referred to the effects of religious faith. But in order to explain the advantages of this valuable asset of life and a spiritual wealth in a better way, we propose to discuss them more elaborately.

Tolstoy, the Russian writer and philosopher says:

"Faith is that thing with which people live".

An Iranian poet and thinker, Hakim Nasir Khusrow addressing his son says:

"I have turned to religion because to me the world without faith is like a prison. I would never like the domain of my heart to be ruined".

Religious faith has many pleasant effects. It creates happiness and delight, promotes better social relations and reduces and relieves worries which are an essential feature of this world. Now let us explain the effect of religious faith from all these three angles:

I. Happiness and Delight

Optimism is the first effect of religious faith from the viewpoint of the creation of happiness and delight. A faithful man is optimistic about the world, the life and the creation. Religious belief gives a particular shape to man's attitude towards the world. As religion maintains that creation has a goal and that its goal is nothing but betterment and evolution, naturally religious belief affects the outlook of man and makes him optimistic about the system of the universe and the laws governing it. The attitude of a faithful man to the universe is similar to the attitude of a man living in a country about which he is sure that its systems, laws and formations are just and fair, that those who are at the helm of its affairs are sincere and well-intentioned, and that in it opportunities of making advancement are available to everyone including himself. Such a man will naturally maintain that the only thing which may keep him or anyone else backward, is the lethargy and inexperience of the person concerned, and that he and all others owe a responsibility and are required to do their duty.

A faithful man will hold himself responsible for his backwardness and will not blame his country and its administration for that. He believes that if there is anything wrong, that is because he and others like him have failed to discharge their duty properly. This feeling will naturally arouse his sense of self-respect and impel him to move forward hopefully.

In contrast a disbeliever is in the universe like a man living in a country about which he believes that its system, laws and formations are unjust and corrupt, and that he has to accept them against his will. The heart of such a man will always be full of malice. He will never think of improving himself. He will think that where everything is wrong, his own uprightness will be of no use at all. Such a man never shall enjoy the world. For him the world will always be like a dreadful prison. That is why the Holy Qur'an says:

"He who turns away from remembering Me, his life will be burdensome." (Surah Ta Ha, 20:124)

Indeed it is faith which expands our life internally and saves us from the pressure of spiritual factors.

From the viewpoint of the creation of happiness and delight the second effect of religious faith is the illumination of heart. As man sees the world illuminated by the light of truth, his heart and soul are also illuminated. Faith is a lamp, which illuminates his inmost. In contrast, a disbeliever finds the world dark, dingy and meaningless, and as a result his own heart remains dark in his supposedly dark world.

The third effect of religious faith from the angle of happiness and delight is the expectation that good efforts produce good results.

From purely material point of view, the world is indifferent as to who goes along the right and just path and who goes along the wrong and unjust path. The result of a deed depends only on one thing, namely the amount of the effort put in it.

But according to the viewpoint of a faithful man the world is not indifferent and neutral in regard to the effort of those who do what is right and those who do wrong. The world's reaction to the effort of these two groups is not the same. The system of the creation supports those who make efforts for the cause of truth, justice and integrity.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"If you help Allah, He will help you." (Surah Muhammad, 47:7)

"Allah does not deprive the righteous of their reward " (Surah at-Tawbah, 9:120; Surah Hud, 11: 115; Surah Yusuf, 12:90)

The fourth effect of religious faith from the viewpoint of the creation of happiness and delight is mental satisfaction. Man by nature seeks success and the very idea of achieving it delights his heart. The apprehension of dark future frightens him and disturbs his peace. There are two things which make man happy and satisfied:

(i) Effort

(ii) Satisfaction in regard to the conditions prevailing in his environment.

The success of a student depends on two things: firstly, his own effort; and secondly, the suitability of the atmosphere of the school and the encouragement he receives from the school authorities. If a hard-working student has no confidence in the atmosphere of his school and in his examiners, he will all the year round be apprehensive of an unfair treatment and will be seized by a sense of anxiety.

Man knows his duty to himself. This aspect does not cause him any worry because what disturbs a man is a sense of doubt and uncertainty. Man is sure about all that concerns himself. What disturbs him and is not clear to him is his duty to the world.

The questions which perturb him most are: Are good deeds of any use? Do truth and honesty serve any useful purpose? Is deprivation the end of doing one's duty? These are the questions which cause anxiety and concern in the most dreadful form.

Religious faith restores man's confidence in the world and allays his distrust about its behaviour towards him. That is why we say that one of the effects of religious faith is mental peace.

Another effect of religious faith from the angle of delight and happiness is the better enjoyment of the pleasures known as spiritual pleasures. There are two types of pleasures that man can feel. Those of the first type are related to one of the five senses and are felt as the result of a contact between an organ of human body and an external object. The eye gets pleasure through seeing, the ear through hearing, the mouth through tasting and the sense of touch through touching. The other type of pleasures are those which are related to the spirit and the inner senses of man. They have no connection with any particular organ and are not obtained through contact with any external object. Such is the case with the pleasures which one gets from doing good or rendering service to others, from enjoying respect and popularity, or from one's success or the success of one's child. These pleasures are neither especially related to any organ nor are they under the direct influence of any external and material factor.

Spiritual pleasures are stronger and more lasting than material pleasures. The pleasure which the true worshippers of Allah get from their worship which they perform with humility and in which they are fully absorbed, is of this nature. In the language of religion it has been described as the 'taste of faith' and the 'flavour of faith'. Faith has a flavour which is better than and superior to every other flavour. Spiritual pleasure is enhanced when a virtuous act such as the acquisition of knowledge or rendering service to others is performed or success is achieved in a task actuated by religious sense. Any act which is performed for the sake of Allah is an act of worship and is Pleasurable.

II. Role of Faith in the Improvement Of Social Relations

Like some other animals man is gregarious. No individual can by himself meet all his needs. It is essential that life should be led on somewhat cooperative basis. Gains and obligations should be shared and a sort of division of labour should be established. Anyhow, there is one difference between man and other gregarious animals like bees etc. Other animals follow the principle of the division of labours by instinct. They have no power not to abide by this law. In contrast, man is a free agent. He has a Power of choice and performs his work of his own accord and regards it as his duty. In other words, social instinct has been forced on other gregarious animals. But though man's needs are social, no such instinct has been imposed on him. Man's social instinct exists within him in the form of an urge which can be fostered and promoted by means of education and training.

A sound social life means that all individuals respect the laws as well as the rights of each other, show friendly feelings to each other and consider justice to be sacred. In a healthy society everyone should like for others what he likes for himself and should dislike for others what he dislikes for himself. All should have confidence in each other, and their mutual confidence should be based on their spiritual qualities. Everyone should consider himself to be responsible to his society, should show the same qualities of piety and chastity in privacy and in public alike, and should do good to others without affectation of kindness. All members of society should resist tyranny and injustice and should not allow any oppressor to create any mischief. All should respect moral values and live together in complete unity and harmony like the organs of one body.

It is religious faith alone which, above all, respects truth, honours justice, encourages kindness and mutual confidence, inculcates the spirit of piety, acknowledges moral values, emboldens the individuals to resist tyranny and unites them into a homogeneous body.

Most of the outstanding men who have shed luster on the world and have shone on the firmament of history, were inspired by religious feelings.

III. Reduction of Worries

Human life consists of successes and achievements, joys and delights as well as failures, afflictions, grief and worries. Many afflictions and failures can be forestalled or remedied, though only after considerable effort. Evidently it is man's responsibility to fight nature and convert the misfortunes of life into good fortunes. Anyhow, many of the bitter events cannot be forestalled, nor can they be counteracted. For example, take the case of old age. One has to become gradually aged and to advance towards decay. Old age, debility and concomitant diseases and disabilities make the life of an aged man difficult. Fear of death and the

apprehension of leaving the world to others is always painful.

Religious faith creates in man a power of resistance and makes the bitterness of life sweet. A faithful man knows that everything in this world has a method. Should it not be possible for him to get rid of the bitterness of life, he would be compensated by Allah in some other way, provided he shows right reaction to his misfortune. To a faithful and pious man old age is pleasant and more enjoyable than young age for two reasons: firstly, he does not believe old age to be the end of everything and secondly, he spends all his spare time with great relish in adoring and remembering Allah. The attitude of a faithful man to death is different from that of a disbeliever. To a faithful man death does not mean annihilation and total destruction. It is only shifting from the transient and little world to the everlasting and big world. Death is moving from the world of action to the world of obtaining results. As such a faithful man counteracts his fear of death by engaging himself in good deeds called by religion "good work".

It is admitted as an indisputable fact by the psychiatrists that most of the psychic diseases resulting from mental worries and bitterness of life are more commonly found among the non-religious men. The religious men having strong faith are comparatively immune from these ailments. A malady of our modern times which has emerged as the result of the weakening of religious faith is the increase in the incidence of the psychic and neural diseases.

School of Thought or Ideology

Definition and Necessity of Ideology

What is ideology and how is it to be defined? Is it necessary for a man as an individual and as a member of society to adhere to a school and believe in an ideology? Is the existence of an ideology necessary for an individual or a society? Before answering these questions some introductory remarks are necessary.

There are two kinds of human activity: enjoyable and politic.

The enjoyable activities are those simple activities which man undertakes in order to secure some pleasure or to escape from some pain under the direct influence of his instinct, nature or habit, which is also a second nature. For example when man feels thirsty he stretches his hand to a water-container, when he sees a biting animal he takes to his heels, and when he feels an urge to smoking, he lights a cigarette.

Such acts are in keeping with man's own yearnings and have a direct bearing on pleasure and pain. A pleasurable act pulls man towards it and a painful act repels him.

Politic activities consist of the acts which in themselves are neither attractive nor repulsive. Man's instinct or his nature neither pulls him towards them nor pushes him away from them. Man performs these acts or avoids them of his will because he thinks that it is in his interest to do that. In other words, in this case the root cause and the force which drives man to do or not to do something is his interest and not pleasure. Pleasure is determined by nature and interest by reason. Pleasure stimulates desire and interest arouses will. As for enjoyable acts man takes pleasure in them while performing them. But as for politic acts, he does not take pleasure, though he may feel happy because of the idea that he is doing something that is right and good for him in the long run. There is a difference between a pleasurable and enjoyable act and an act which does not give pleasure and even may cause some pain and hardship, although man may be performing it willingly and happily. Politic acts are not pleasurable because, they do not produce immediate results. Anyhow they give satisfaction. Pleasure and pain are common to man and animals. But happiness and unhappiness and satisfaction and dissatisfaction are peculiar to man. Similarly to desire something is also peculiar to human beings. Satisfaction, dissatisfaction and desiring are mental functions. They lie within the sphere of human thinking, not

within the area of sense perception.

We have said that man performs his politic acts with the help of his intellect and his will-power. On the other hand, the enjoyable acts are performed by him at the command of his feelings and inclinations. That an act is done at the command of intellect means that the calculating intellectual power perceives some remote benefit, pleasure or perfection, discovers the way of attaining of it, which occasionally may be a tedious one, and then plans to attain it. The accomplishment of an act with the help of will-power means that man has a faculty, the role of which is to execute the actions approved by intellect. These acts may sometimes even be opposed to his natural tendencies and inclinations.

The young nature of a student calls him to eat, drink, be merry, and to enjoy sleep and sex, but his calculating mind warns him against the evil consequences of these acts and urges him to keep awake, do hard work and shun indulgence in luxurious living and the lusts of the flesh. At this time man prefers to obey the command of intellect, which is to his advantage and ignores the command of his nature which implies pleasure only. Similarly a patient dislikes to take a bitter medicine of bad taste, but he still takes it at the command of his rightly directing intellect or by the force of his will which can overpower his natural inclination.

The stronger the intellect and the will, the better they can impose their command on nature, despite its tendencies to the opposite.

In the course of his politic activities man at every stage puts into practice some theory or plan. The more a man is developed from the angle of his intellect and will, the more his activities are politic rather than enjoyable, and the more he is close to the horizon of animality, the more his activities are rather enjoyable than politic, for the enjoyable activities are mostly animal activities.

Among animals also we see certain activities directed to achieve a remote object, such as making nests, migration, mating and reproduction. But the animals do not carry out these activities consciously and of their own choice after determining what they want to achieve and how it should be achieved. On the other hand, they carry out these activities as a result of a compulsory and instinctive inspiration from beyond.

It is possible that the scope of man's politic activities gets so expanded that it may include some enjoyable activities also. Therefore all human activities should, as far as possible, be so planned that pleasure-giving activities also become useful and beneficial besides being pleasurable. Every natural activity while responding to the command of nature, should obey the command of intellect also. If politic activity takes the enjoyable activity under its cover, and if the enjoyable activity becomes a

part of the general politic plan of life, nature will become compatible with intellect and the desire with will.

As politic activity revolves round a set of remote objects and aims, it naturally requires a plan, a method and the selection of means to secure the object. As this activity has an individualistic aspect, for it is planned by an individual for himself, it is individual intellect which determines its method and means. The choice, of course, depends on one's knowledge, information and power of judgement.

Though politic activity of man is essential for his humanity, it alone, whatever be its quality, is not enough to humanize all his activities. It is true that intellect, knowledge and planning form one half of man's humanity, but yet they are not enough to make human activity human. Human activity can be called human only if it, besides being rational and intentional, is in keeping with the higher tendencies of humanity or at least is not in conflict with them. Otherwise even the worst type of criminal activities are sometimes very cleverly planned and executed. The fiendish imperialist plans bear witness to this fact. In religious terms of Islam any planning or effort made to secure a material and beastly goal not in keeping with human and religious tendencies is called abominable and fiendish. Politic activity is not necessarily human. If it is beastly, it is far more dangerous than a purely pleasurable activity. For example an animal in order to fill its belly tears another animal or a man into pieces. But man who can calculate and plan, to secure a similar object ruins so many cities and puts millions of innocent people under fire.

We leave aside the question whether the goals suggested by intellect are or are not enough to meet individual interests. In other words we leave the question as to what is the limit of the effectiveness of individual intellect or reason in regard to pointing out the individual interests. Yet in any case there is no doubt that thinking power is necessary and useful for making partial and limited arrangements of life. In his life man faces many problems such as the selection of friends, selection of an educational line, selection of a spouse, selection of a profession, travel, behaviour in society, recreation, virtuous activities, fight against immoral and vicious practices and so on. In regard to all these things man is certainly in need of thinking and planning. The more he will think, the more success he is likely to gain. In some cases he even requires the help of others' thinking and experience also (the principle of consultation). In all these particular cases man makes a plan and then carries it out.

Anyhow, the question remains whether on a wider scale also man is capable of making a general plan which may cover all the problems of his personal life and which may be applicable to all situations, or his ability is limited to handling some particular cases on a limited scale only and it is beyond the power of human intellect to cover all situations and to ensure all round success.

We know that certain philosophers believe in the theory of 'self-sufficiency'. They claim that they have discovered the way of being happy and unhappy, and can pass a happy life relying on their own intellectual power and will. But we also know that no two philosophers can be found who have unanimity of opinion as to what is this way.

Happiness itself, which is the ultimate goal, is of the most ambiguous things, although its conception appears to be very clear at first glance. It is still unknown what happiness is and what factors cause it. Man himself and his capabilities and potentialities are not known yet. So long as man himself is unknown, how is it possible that we may be able to find out what his happiness is and how that is to be obtained?

Furthermore, man is a social being. His social life creates thousands of problems for him which he has to resolve. His duty in every case should be clear. As man is a social being, his happiness, his aspirations, his standards of good and evil, his way of life, his selection of the means of leading his life are inter-linked with the happiness of others, their aspirations, their standards of good and evil, their way of life and their selection of the means. Man cannot select his way independently of others. He should seek his happiness on the road which leads society to happiness and perfection.

If we take into consideration the question of the eternity of soul and the inexperience of reason in regard to the life Hereafter, the problem becomes far more difficult.

Now, here appears the need of a school, an ideology, a general theory or a comprehensive and harmonious system whose fundamental aim is the human perfection and the happiness of all. This system should specify the fundamental principles, methods, do's and don'ts, good actions and bad actions, aims and means, requirements and their solutions, responsibilities and obligations. It should be the source of the inspiration of duties for all individuals.

From the very beginning or at least from the time the developed social life has led to so many dissensions,[9] man has been in need of an ideology or in the Qur'anic terminology, Shari'at. As the time passed and man became more developed, this need also became more intense. In the past, racial, national and tribal tendencies ruled over human societies like a collective spirit. This spirit in its turn brought into existence a series of ambitions (though inhuman) which united each society and gave it a particular orientation. Now scientific and intellectual progress has weakened these bonds. It is a characteristic of science that it tends towards individualism, weakens sentiments and dulls the bonds based on sentiments. It is only a consciously selected rational philosophy of life or in other words, a comprehensive and perfect ideology which may unite the humanity of today or rather of tomorrow, give it an orientation, a common ideal and a common standard to judge what is right and what is wrong.

Today more than ever man requires such a philosophy of life, a philosophy capable of attracting him to the realities beyond the individual and individual interests. There is no longer any doubt about the fact that a school or an ideology is one of the necessities of social life.

Now the question is: who can lay down such an ideology? Undoubtedly the intellect of any single individual cannot do so. Can the collective intellect do that? Can man with the help of his total experience and his past and present information lay down such an ideology? If we admit that man does not know himself, then how can we expect him to know human society and social weal. Then what to do? If we have a right conception of the universe, and believe that the world has a balanced system and there is nothing wrong or absurd in it, we must admit that the great creative machinery has not left this big question unattended and has already specified the fundamental outlines of an ideology from a horizon above the horizon of human intellect, that is from the horizon of revelation (the principle of Prophethood). The job of intellect and knowledge is to move along these outlines.

How nicely has Avicenna put this question when, while describing the need of mankind to the Divine law *(Shari'at)* revealed through a man, he said in his book, *Najat*: "The need of a Prophet and exponent of the Divine law and human ideology for the continuity of human race and man's attaining perfection of his human existence is far greater than the growth of hair on his eyebrows, the concavity of his soles or other such things, which are at the most useful for the continuity of human race, but not essential".

In other words, how can the great creative machinery which has not left small and superfluous needs unattended, leave the most essential need uncared for?

But if we lack the right conception of the universe and creation, we may accept the idea that man has been condemned to bewilderment and error and any human ideology is no more than an interesting pursuit or pastime.

The above discussion not only makes the need of the existence of a school or an ideology clear, but also shows the necessity of an individual's adhesion to it.

The true adherence to an ideology means to have faith in it, and evidently a true faith cannot be imposed by force nor can it be acquired as a matter of expediency. One can be made to submit to a thing by force, but ideology does not demand submission. It demands faith. It is to be accepted and assimilated.

A useful ideology, on the one hand, must be based on a sort of world conception that may convince reason and feed thinking, and on the other hand, must be able to derive attractive goals from its conception of the universe. Conviction and zeal are the two basic elements of faith which go hand in hand and remould the world.

However there are some questions which we must discuss briefly. Their detailed discussion we leave to a better opportunity,

Kinds of Ideologies

I. There are two kinds of ideologies: human ideology and class ideology.

Human ideology is that which is addressed to all mankind, not to any particular class, race or community. The proclaimed aim of a human ideology is the emancipation of human race, not of any particular group or class. Its plan covers all strata of society and does not remain confined to any particular stratum or group.

Class ideology, in contrast, is addressed to a particular class, group or a stratum of society, and its proclaimed aim is the emancipation or supremacy of a particular group. The plan that it puts forward is confined to that group only, from which alone it recruits its supporters and defenders.

Each of these two kinds of ideologies is based on a particular conception of man. Every general and human ideology like Islamic ideology has that attitude towards man which may be called natural. From Islamic point of view man has been created to be superior to historical and social factors. He has a special existential dimension, and has been endowed with high qualities which distinguish him from animals. According to this view, man's creative design is such that all human beings have been endowed with a sort of consciousness and intuition, which makes them fit to be addressed and enables them to respond to a call. Human ideologies base their preachings on the natural intuition peculiar to mankind and infuse a spirit of action in man.

Some ideologies have a different view of man. According to them, the human species is not fit that a call be addressed to it, nor can it respond to a call. They maintain that the consciousness and the tendencies of man are determined by the historical factors of his national life and the social factors which fire his class status. Should we overlook historical and social factors, then man in the absolute sense has neither consciousness nor any intuitive power nor is he fit to be called upon to perform a mission. In that case he will not be a concrete man and his existence will be merely conceptual. Marxism and similarly national philosophies are based on such a view of

man. These philosophies aim at class benefits or are based on national and racial sentiments or at the most on national culture.

There is no doubt that the ideology of Islam is of the first kind, and is based on true nature of man. That is why Islam addresses its message to the 'common people',[10] and not to a particular group or class. Islam was able to draw its supporters practically from all groups, even from those to fight against which it had risen, namely the groups which it termed the luxuriously living. It was a great achievement of Islam that it was able to draw recruits from a class to fight against that very class and from a group to fight against the interests of that very group, and even to arouse the individual to fight against himself. This is a deed which Islam has performed and is still performing. Islam being a religion which relies on the innate nature of man and infiltrates into the inmost traits of his existence, can arouse the individual to fight and bring about a revolution against himself. This revolution is called penitence. The revolutionary power of a class or group ideology is limited to the instigation of an individual against another individual or a class against another class, but it cannot persuade an individual to revolutionize himself, nor can it put the inner sentiments and passions of man under his own control.

Islam, being a religion, and for that matter the final religion, has come, more than any other religion, to set up a system of social justice.[11] Naturally it aims at the emancipation of the oppressed and the underprivileged. But it does not direct its message to the oppressed and the underprivileged alone. Islam has not recruited its supporters from this class only. As history bears witness to it, relying on the force of faith and the innate nature of man, Islam has been able to draw its supporters even from among those classes to fight against which it had risen. Islam presents a theory of the triumph of humanity over animality, of knowledge over ignorance, of justice over tyranny, of equality over discrimination, of virtue over depravity, of piety over sensuality, and of monotheism over polytheism. The success of the oppressed people against the tyrants and the despots is a manifestation of this triumph.

II. In consequence of the foregoing discussion a question arises whether the genuine human culture is of a uniform character or there exists no human and uniform culture; and all that exists and will exist in future is a series of many cultures each of them having national, communal or class characteristics?

This question is linked with another question. Has or has not man a genuine and uniform innate nature, giving uniformity to human culture? If human nature is uniform, it should impart uniformity to human culture also. Otherwise it will be reasonable to believe that culture is a product of historical, national and geographical

factors or a product of class financial interests. Islam, because of its particular world conception, believes in the uniformity of human nature. It supports the idea of the uniformity of ideology and culture also.

III. Evidently it is only a human, not class ideology, a uniform ideology, not one based on the division of mankind, and a natural ideology, not one inspired by profiteering interests, that can be established on human values and can have human characteristics.

IV. Does the nature of every ideology depend on its time and place? Is it necessary for man to have a different ideology with every change in times, circumstances and environment? Is ideology subject to the principle of a change with a variation in place, and subject to the principle of cancellation with a variation in time? Is human ideology uniform or multiform?

In other words, is it absolute or relative?

The question, whether an ideology from the viewpoint of time and place is absolute or relative depends on another question: whether its source is human nature and its goal is the prosperity of human race, or its source is group interests and national and class feelings?

From another angle this question depends on what we think about the nature of social changes. When society undergoes a change and enters a new era, does its nature change so essentially that it is no longer governed by the laws by which it was governed previously, as for example, when water with the increase in its temperature, turns into steam, it is governed by the laws of gases and not by those of liquids. Or do we believe that this is not the case with social changes and developments, and that social changes constitute only a stage in the evolution of society and do not affect the fundamental laws or the course of evolution, just as we find in the case of animals that as they develop, their way of life changes, but the laws of their development remain fixed and constant?

From another angle the question whether an ideology is absolute or relative to time and place, is dependent on whether its conception of the world is scientific, philosophical or religious. Scientific conception of the world being transient, an ideology based on it cannot be lasting. On the contrary the philosophical conception of the world is based on self-evident truths and the religious conception on Divine revelation and Prophethood.

This not being the proper occasion, we skip over the discussion of the pure state of human nature, which is one of the most important topics of Islamic science. Similarly

we skip over the discussion of changes in society. Anyhow, we propose to take up the question of social changes and their relation with pure state of human nature when we discuss the topic of history and society later.

V. Now the question is whether an ideology itself is governed by the principle of constancy or the principle of change. In the foregoing we have discussed whether human ideology is different in different periods and places. There the question was that of the abrogation and cancellation of an ideology. Now we take up a different question, namely that of the development of an ideology. Irrespective of the fact whether it is absolute or relative and whether in regard to its content it is general or particular, an ideology is a phenomenon. As all phenomena are subject to changes, development and evolution, naturally a question arises whether the same is true of the ideology also. Is the reality of an ideology at the time of its birth different from that during its growth and during the period of its maturity? In other words, should an ideology be constantly revised, improved and modernized by its leaders and ideologists, as we find in the case of the materialistic ideologies of our time? If the modern ideologies are not constantly revised, they soon lose their vitality and become obsolete and outdated. Anyhow, the question is whether it is possible to have an ideology, which may be in complete harmony with the course of the development of man and society so that there should be no need of its further revision and improvement. In the case of such an ideology the role of its leaders and the ideologists will be confined to the interpretation of its meaning and content, and the ideological development will be in the field of interpretation, not in the text of the ideology itself.

[9] According to the Qur'an, these dissensions rose in Prophet Nuh's time.

[10] The term 'common people' is often misunderstood and considered to by synonymous with 'masses' as distinguished from higher classes. As Islam addresses the common people, it is claimed that Islam is the religion of the masses. Incidentally, this is considered to be a merit of Islam. But we must remember that Islam does not address its message to the masses only, nor is its ideology a class ideology. The real merit of Islam lies in the fact that it advanced with the support of the masses, not that it was addressed to them only. What is more meritorious is that Islam has worked up the sentiments of the well-to-do classes among the Muslims for the benefit of the underprivileged classes.

[11] ***"Surely We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Book and a criterion so that people may observe justice."*** (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25)

"Say: My Lord has ordered me to be fair." (Surah al-A'raf, 7:29)

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Chapter 5

Islam - A Comprehensive School

Islam, which is based on a perfect conception of the universe is a comprehensive and realistic school. In Islam attention has been paid to all aspects of human needs, whether they are carnal or spiritual, intellectual or sentimental, individualistic or social and whether they pertain to this world or the next.

The series of the Islamic teachings comprises three sections:

(i) Doctrinal tenets or fundamental principles in which every one is required to obtain belief. The task which one has to undertake in this respect is a sort of scientific and research work.

(ii) Moral law or the qualities which a Muslim must inculcate in himself. A Muslim should also shun the qualities which are opposed to them. The task which one has to undertake in this respect is a sort of character building.

(iii) Law or the rules of conduct in respect of human activities, whether they pertain to this world or the next and whether they are individualistic or collective.

According to the Shi'ah school there are five doctrinal tenets of Islam: Monotheism, Justice, Prophethood, Imamate and the Hereafter.

As far as the doctrinal tenets are concerned, Islam maintains that it is not enough just to acknowledge them unquestioningly or as a family tradition. It is the duty of every individual to believe in them independently and voluntarily after having been convinced of their truth. From Islamic point of view worship is not confined to the physical worship like Prayers and Fasting or to financial worship like the payment of Khums and Zakat. There is another kind of worship which consists of thinking and pondering. If this mental worship leads to the awakening of man, it is far superior to many years' physical worship.

Causes of Wrong Thinking

The Holy Qur'an calls upon the people to think and to draw conclusions. It regards thinking as a part of worship, and does not recognize the belief in its doctrinal tenets if it is not the outcome of correct thinking. Islam in this connection has paid attention to a basic point. It has pointed out the causes which lead to wrong thinking and has

explained what to do to avoid error and deviation.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned a number of factors which cause error. We mention them below:

I. Reliance on Conjecture Instead of Sure Knowledge

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Most people are such that if you follow them they will lead you away from the right path, because they rely on conjecture only."*** (Surah al-An'am, 6:116)

The Holy Qur'an strictly forbids following a conjecture. It says: ***"Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed the ear, the eye, and the heart each will be questioned."*** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:36)

The philosophers admit that dubious knowledge is the main cause of mistakes. Many centuries after the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, Descartes declared this to be the first principle of his logic. He said: "I do not consider anything to be a reality unless it becomes obvious to me. I avoid haste, association of ideas and predisposition; and accept only that which is so clear and distinct that there can be no doubt about it"

II. Bias and Base Desires

If man wants to judge rightly, he should fully maintain his impartiality. In other words he should seek truth only, and accept without hesitation what evidence proves. He should behave exactly like a judge in a court of justice, who while studying a case ought to be neutral to the claims of both the parties. If he is biased towards one party, the arguments in favour of that party will unconsciously attract his attention and the arguments against it will automatically be missed by him. That is what will mislead the judge.

If man is not neutral and his thinking is lop-sided, the pointer of his thinking will unconsciously be inclined towards his personal liking and personal desire. That is why the Holy Qur'an regards the base desires as much a source of error as reliance on a guess and conjecture. It says: ***"They follow but conjecture and that which themselves desire."*** (Surah an-Najm, 53:23)

III. Haste

To be able to express an opinion about a question one should have adequate evidence before him. Unless there is enough evidence, any hasty expression of an opinion is likely to lead to an error. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly refers to the insufficiency of human knowledge for pronouncing an opinion in respect of many important questions. For example it says: ***"You have been given but little knowledge."*** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:85)

Imam Sadiq has said: *"In the two verses of the Holy Qur'an Allah has warned men against two things:*

(i) He has said that they must not believe a thing unless they have sure knowledge about it (Warning against hasty believing).

(ii) He has said that they must not deny a thing unless they have sure knowledge about it (Warning against hasty denial).

In one verse Allah says: ***"Were they not asked in the Book to give an undertaking that they would speak nothing concerning Allah except the truth?"*** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:169)

In another verse He says: ***"In fact they denied that of which they had not enough knowledge."*** (Surah Yunus, 10:39)

IV. Traditional Thinking and Looking to the Past

Man has a natural tendency to readily accept an idea or a belief that was accepted by the past generations, without giving it any further thought. The Holy Qur'an reminds people that they should have independent thinking and should not accept anything without judging it carefully, simply because it was accepted by others in the

past. The Holy Qur'an says:

"We follow the traditions of our forefathers. What! Even though their forefathers did not understand anything and had no guidance." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:170)

V- Cult of Personality

Another cause of wrong thinking is the cult of personality. Because of the great respect in which they are held, the celebrated historical and contemporary personalities influence the thinking and the will of others. In fact the famous personalities control the thinking of others, who think as they think and have the same opinions as they have. Other people do not dare differ from the great people and so lose their independence of thought and will.

The Holy Qur'an calls upon people to think independently and not to follow their elders and other influential personalities blindly, because to do that is likely to bring them bad luck.

The Holy Qur'an tells us that the misguided people will be saying on the Day of Judgement: ***"Our Lord! We obeyed our chiefs and great men who misled us from the right path."*** (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:67)

Sources of Thoughts In Islam

The Holy Qur'an which has urged people to think, not only pointed out the causes of wrong thinking, but has also specified the subjects which are fit to be pondered on and which can be used as sources of knowledge and information.

On the whole Islam is opposed to wasting energy on the question which cannot be investigated or even if they can be, they are not beneficial to man.

The Prophet of Islam has called vain the knowledge, the achieving of which is of no use and the lacking of which causes no harm, on the other hand, Islam has encouraged the knowledge of those subjects which are useful and open to research.

The Holy Qur'an suggests three subjects for useful and beneficial thinking: Nature, History, and Human Conscience.

I. Nature

In many verses scattered throughout the Holy Quran the natural objects such as the earth, the sky, the stars, the sun, the moon, the clouds, the rain, the movement of the wind, the sailing of boats on the sea, the plants, the animals and every thing that man may perceive in his surroundings, have been mentioned as subjects fit to think over deeply and to draw conclusion. As an example we quote here one Qur'anic verse:

"Say: Behold what is in the heavens and the earth." (Surah Yunus, 10:101)

II. History

There are so many verses in the Holy Qur'an which invite man to the study of the past peoples and describe such study as a source of knowledge. From the Holy Qur'an's point of view all

developments of human history take place in accordance with systematic norms and laws. All historical events involving honour or disgrace, success or failure, good luck or bad luck have their definite and well-calculated rules. By knowing these rules and laws current history can be brought under control and can be turned to the advantage of the present generation. Here there is one verse as an example:

"Different traditions existed in the past. So travel across the land and see the fate of those who denied the revealed truth." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:137)

III. Human Conscience

The Holy Qur'an mentions human conscience as a special source of knowledge. From the Qur'anic point of view the entire creation consists of Divine signs and is a key to the discovery of truth. The Qur'an describes the world outside man as 'horizons' and the world inside him as 'selves', and thus instills in him the special importance of human conscience. That is why the term 'horizons and selves' has gained currency in Islamic literature.[12]

There is a world famous sentence of the German philosopher Kant, which is inscribed on his tombstone:

"There are two things which greatly excite the admiration of man: one is the starry sky located over our head and the other is conscience located within us".

[12] The Holy Qur'an says: ***"We shall (continue to) show Our signs to them in the horizons of the external world and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that the Qur'an is the truth."*** (Surah Fussilat, 41:53)

Conception of the Universe

Every doctrine and every philosophy of life is indispensably based on a sort of belief, an evaluation of life and a sort of interpretation and analysis of the world.

The way of thinking of a school in respect of life and the world is considered to be the basis of the entire thinking of that school. This basis is called the world conception of that school.

All religions, social systems, schools of thought and social philosophies are based on a particular world conception. All the goals which a school presents, the ways and methods which it brings into existence are the corollaries of the conception of the world that it entertains.

The philosophers say that there are two kinds of wisdom: practical and theoretical.

Theoretical wisdom is to know the existing things as they are. Practical wisdom is to find out how one should lead his life. This 'should' is the logical result of 'how they are', especially those 'how they are, with which metaphysical philosophy deals.

Conception of the World and Perception of the World

Evidently we should not confuse the conception of the world with its sense perception. Conception of the world has the sense of cosmogony and is linked with the question of identification. Unlike sense perception, which is common to man and other living beings, identification is peculiar to man, and hence conception of the world is also peculiar to him. It depends on his thinking and understanding.

From the point of view of sense perception of the world, many animals are more advanced than man, because either they are equipped with certain senses which man lacks, as it is said that birds have a radar sense, or their senses, although common to them and man, are sharper than the senses possessed by man, as is said of the sight of the eagle, of the sense of smell of the dog and ant and of the sense of hearing of the rat. Man is superior to other animals because he has a deep conception of the world. Animals only perceive the world, but man can interpret it also.

What is identification? What is the relationship between perception and identification? What elements other than perceptional ones are part of identification? How do they enter identification and from where? What is the mechanism of identification? What is the standard by which correct and incorrect identification are judged?

These are the questions which require a separate treatise, and at present we are unable to take them up. Anyhow, it is certain that perception of a thing is different from its identification. Many people view a scene and all of them see it alike, but only a few of them can interpret it, and they too often differ?

Varieties of World Conception

On the whole there are three kinds of world conception or world identification or, in other words, man's interpretation of the universe. It can be inspired by three sources: science, philosophy and religion. So we can say that there are three kinds of world conception: scientific, philosophical and religious.

Scientific Conception of the World

Now let us see how and to what extent science helps us form an opinion. Science is based on two things, theory and experiment. For the discovery and interpretation of a phenomenon first a theory comes to the mind of a scholar and then on its basis he carries out experiments in the laboratory. If it is corroborated by the experiment, it gains acceptance as a scientific principle and remains valid till a better and a more comprehensive theory appears and is corroborated by experiment. With the appearance of a new and more comprehensive theory, the old theory becomes invalid.

That is how science discovers the cause and the effect of a experiment. Then it again tries to discover the cause of that cause and the effect of that effect. This process continues so long as possible.

The scientific work has many advantages and disadvantages as it is based on practical experiment. The greatest advantage of the scientific discoveries is that they are specific and particular.

Science can impart to man a lot of information about a particular It can give a volume of knowledge about one single leaf of a tree. Furthermore, because it acquaints man with the particular laws governing each thing, it enables him to control and use things his advantage,

and thus promotes industry and technology.

Though science can teach man thousands of things about a particular thing, yet the knowledge imparted by science being specific, its scope is limited. Experiments place a limitation in it. Science can go forward only to the extent it is possible for it to make an experiment. Obviously it cannot experiment with the entire creation and all its aspects. Science can go forward in pursuit of causes and effects only to a certain extent and then it reaches the stage of 'unknown'. It is like a powerful searchlight which illuminates a limited area, and does not throw light beyond its range. No experiment can be made on such questions whether this world has a beginning and an end or is it infinite from both sides? When a scholar reaches this point, he consciously or unconsciously resorts to philosophy to express his opinion. From the stand point of science this world is an old book the first and the last pages of which have been lost. Neither its beginning is known nor its end. The reason is that the scientific conception of the world is the outcome of the knowledge of a part of, not of the whole. Science informs us of the position of some parts of the world, not of the features and the characteristics of the whole of it. The scientific conception of the world held by scientists is like the conception of an elephant acquired by those who passed their hands on it in darkness. He who touched the ear of the elephant thought that it was like a fan; he who touched its leg thought that it was like a pillar and he who touched its back thought that it was like a raised platform.

Another drawback of the scientific conception of the world is that it cannot be the basis of any ideology, for science is inconstant and changeable from its practical aspect, that is the aspect of showing reality as it is and inviting faith in the nature of the reality of creation. Scientifically the features of the world change from day to day, because science is based on a combination of theory and experiment and not on self-evident rational truths. The theory and experiment have a temporary value only. As such the scientific conception of the world is an inconstant and changeable conception and is not fit to become the basis of faith. Faith requires a more stable or rather an eternal basis.

The scientific conception of the world, because of the limitation imposed on it by the tools of science (theory and experiment), is unable to answer a number of questions, the definite answer of which is essential for an ideology. Such questions are: From where has this world come? Where does it go? From the viewpoint of time has the world a beginning and an end? What is its position from the viewpoint of place? Is or is not the existence, on the whole, something good and meaningful? Is the world governed by some essential and unchangeable norms and laws, or does no such thing exists? Is the creation on the whole a living and conscious unit or is man alone an accidental exception? Can an existing thing become non-existent or a non-existing thing become existent? Is the restoration of a non-existing thing possible or impossible? Is the exact re-creation of the world and history in all their details possible even after billions of years (Theory of recurring in Cycles?) Is unity preponderant or multiplicity? Is the world divided into material and non-material, and is the material world a small part of the entire world? Is the world rightly guided and perceptive or is it imperceptible and blind? Are man and the world in a state of reciprocity? Does the world show reaction to

the good and bad deeds of man? Does there exist an eternal life in the wake of this transient life? There are so many other similar questions.

Science does not answer all these questions, for it cannot make an experiment with them. Science can answer only limited and particular questions, but is unable to draw a general picture of the world. We give an example to make our point clear.

An individual may have a local knowledge of a big city. He may know a part of it in detail and may be able to draw a picture of its roads, lanes and even houses. Another person may have a similarly detailed knowledge of another part of the city, and a third, a fourth and a fifth person may know other parts of it. If we collect information from all of them, we may get enough information about each part of the city. But will this information be enough to have a complete and overall picture of it? For example, can we know what shape the city is; whether it is circular, quadrangular or of the shape of a leaf? If it resembles a leaf, then a leaf of which tree? How are various areas of it connected with each other? What sort of automobiles connect them? Is the city on the whole beautiful or ugly? Evidently we cannot get all this information.

If we want to have such information and for example if we want to know the shape of the city or want to know whether it is beautiful or ugly, we should ride an aircraft and have an overall aerial view of it.

As we have said, science is unable to answer the basic questions necessary to form a conception of the world. It cannot provide an overall picture of the whole body of the universe.

Leaving all this aside, the value of scientific conception of the world is practical and technical, not theoretical, while an ideology can be based on theoretical value only. Had the reality of the world been as depicted by science, that would have constituted the theoretical value of science. Its practical and technical value lies in the fact that irrespective of its depicting or not depicting reality, it enables man to perform fruitful tasks. Modern industry and technology demonstrate the practical value of science. It is really amazing that in the modern world while technical and practical value of science has increased, its theoretical value has been reduced.

Those who are not fully conversant with the role of science, may think that along with its undeniable practical progress science has also enlightened the conscience of man and has convinced him of the reality as depicted by it. But that is not a fact.

From the foregoing it is clear that an ideology requires that kind of conception of the world which (i) may answer the basic questions concerning the universe as a whole, not only a part of it; (ii) may be an eternal and reliable conception, not a transient and passing one; and (iii)

may have a theoretical and realistic value also not merely a practical and technical one. Thus, it is also clear that the scientific conception of the world, despite of its other merits, lacks all these three requirements.

Philosophical Conception of the World

Though philosophical conception of the world is not as exact and specific as scientific conception, it is based on a number of principles which are self-evident and undeniable by the mind. These principles proceed logically and are general and comprehensive. As such they have the advantage of being firm and constant. Philosophical conception of the world is free from that inconstancy and limitations which are found in scientific conception.

Philosophical conception of the world answers all questions on which the ideologies depend. It identifies the overall shape and features of the world.

Both the scientific and philosophical conceptions are a prelude to action, but in two different ways. Scientific conception is a prelude to action because it enables man to control nature and introduce changes in it. Man by means of science can use nature to his advantage as he wishes. Philosophical conception is a prelude to action in the sense that it determines man's choice of his way of life. It affects his reaction to his encounter with the world. It fixes his attitude and gives him a particular outlook on the world and the creation. It either gives an ideal to man or takes away an ideal from him. It either gives meaning to his life or draws him to absurdity and nothingness. That is why we say that science cannot give man a world conception that may become the basis of an ideology, but philosophy can.

Religious Conception of the World

If we regard every expression of an overall view of the world and the creation as a philosophical conception, not taking into consideration whether the source of this conception is a guess or reasoning or a revelation from the unknown world, religious and philosophical conceptions belong to the same domain. But if we take their source into account, philosophical and religious conceptions of the world are undoubtedly two different things.

In certain religions like Islam, religious conception of the world, has taken a philosophical or argumentative colour and is an integral part of the religion itself. The questions raised by religion are based on reasoning and proof. Thus Islamic conception of the world is rational and philosophical.

Besides the two merits of philosophical conception, namely eternity and comprehensiveness,

religious conception of the world unlike scientific and purely philosophical conceptions, possesses one more merit of sanctification of the principles of world conception.

If we keep in view that an ideology, besides requiring faith in the eternity and inviolability of the principles held sacred by it, requires a belief in and adherence to a school of thought, it becomes clear that its basis can be only that conception of the world which has a religious colour.

From the foregoing discussion it may be inferred that a conception of the world can be the basis of an ideology only if it possesses stability, philosophical broad thinking and the sanctity of religious principles.

How to Judge an Ideology?

A perfect ideology is that which:

(i) Can be proved and expressed in a logical form; in other words, is logically and intellectually tenable;

(ii) Gives meaning to life and removes nihilistic ideas from the mind;

(iii) Is inspiring;

(iv) Is capable of giving sanctity to the human and social goals; and

(v) Makes man accountable.

If an ideology is logically tenable, the way is paved for its being accepted intellectually and there being no ambiguity about it, action as suggested by it becomes easy.

An inspiring ideology makes its school attractive and gives it warmth and power.

The sanctification of the goals of a school by its ideology, makes it easy for the adherents of this school to make sacrifice for its cause. If a school does not declare its goals to be sacred, it cannot create a sense of adoration and sacrifice in regard to its principle, nor can there be any guarantee of the success of such a school.

The accountability of man declared by a conception of the world, commits the individual to the depth of his conscience and makes him responsible to himself and to society.

Monotheistic Conception of the World

All these qualities and characteristics which are an essential requirement of a good conception of the world are found in monotheistic conception. It is the only conception which has all these characteristics. Monotheistic conception means the realization of the fact that the world has come out of a wise will and that its system is founded on mercy, munificence and all that is good. It aims at leading the existing things to a perfection befitting them. Monotheistic conception means that the world is 'mono-axis' and 'mono-orbit'. It means that the world is 'from Allah' and returns' to Allah'.

All the existing things of the world are harmonious and their evolution proceeds towards the same centre. Nothing has been created in vain and without having a purpose. The world is being managed under a series of definite systems known as 'Divine law'. Among the existing things man enjoys a special dignity, and has a special duty and a special mission. He is responsible for his own promotion and perfection as well as the reform of his society. The world is a school, and Allah rewards everyone according to his intention and valid effort.

Monotheistic conception of the world is supported by logic, science and sound arguments. Every particle of the world is a sign of the existence of an All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah and every leaf of a tree is a book of spiritual knowledge.

Monotheistic conception of the world gives to life a meaning, a spirit and a goal. It puts man on a way to perfection on which he continues to march forward without stopping at any stage.

Monotheistic conception of the world has a special attraction. It gives vitality and vigour to man. It puts forward lofty and sacred goals and produces selfless individuals.

Monotheistic conception of the world is the only conception of it which gives meaning to the responsibility of people to each other. Similarly it is the only conception that saves man from falling into the abyss of absurdity.

Islamic Conception of the World

Islamic conception of the world is monotheistic. Islam has presented monotheism in its purest form. From Islamic point of view, Allah has no like of Him and nothing can be compared to Him: ***"There is nothing like Him."*** (Surah ash-Shura, 42:11)

Allah is absolutely independent. All depend on Him, but He depends on none:

"You are in need of Allah. And Allah! He is Absolute, Laudable." (Surah al-Fatir, 35:15)

Allah is aware of everything. He can do whatever He likes:

"He is fully aware of everything." (Surah ash-Shura, 42:12)

"He is able to do all things." (Surah al-Hajj, 22:6)

Allah is everywhere. Every place, whether it is above the sky or in the depth of the earth has the same relation to Him. To whatever direction we stand, we face Him: ***"Wherever you turn, there is Allah's countenance"*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:115)

Allah knows what is in the hearts of people. He is aware of their intentions and aims: ***"Indeed We have created man and We know what his soul whispers."*** (Surah Qaf, 50:16)

Allah is closer to man than his jugular vein: ***"We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."*** (Surah Qaf, 50:16)

Allah has all the good attributes and is free from every defect: ***"Allah's are the fairest names."*** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:180)

Allah is not a material organism and cannot be seen with eyes: ***"Vision does not comprehend Him, but He comprehends all vision."*** (Surah al-An'am, 6:103)

From the stand point of monotheistic and Islamic conception of the world, the universe is a creation and is looked after by Divine will and attention. If Divine attention were withheld for a moment, the whole universe would be annihilated in no time.

This world has not been created in vain or in jest. There are many advantages implied in the creation of man and the world. Nothing has been created unbecoming and futile. The existing system of the universe is the best and the most perfect. It manifests justice and truth and is

based on a sequence of causes and effects. Every result is a logical consequence of a cause and every cause produces a specific effect. Divine destiny brings a thing into existence through its specific causes only, and it is a chain of causes which constitutes the Divine destiny of a thing.

Divine will always operates in the world in the form of a law or a general principle. Divine laws do not change. Whatever changes take place, they are always in accordance with some law. Good and evil in the world are related to man's own conduct and his own deeds. Good deeds and bad deeds, besides being recompensed in the next world, have their reaction in this world also. Gradual evolution is a Divine law. This world is a nursery for the development of man.

Divine destiny is supreme in the whole world. Man has been destined by it to be free and responsible. He is the master of his own destiny. Man has his special dignity. He is fit to be the vicegerent of Allah. This world and the Hereafter are but two interconnected stages like those of sowing and harvest, for one reaps what one sows. They may also be compared to the two periods of childhood and old age, for the latter period is the outcome of the former.

Realistic Conception of the World

Islam is a realistic religion. The word "Islam" means submission. This indicates that the first condition of being a Muslim is to submit to the realities and truths. Islam rejects every kind of obduracy, stubbornness, prejudice, blind imitation, bias and selfishness, and regards all of them as contrary to realism and realistic approach to truth. From the point of view of Islam a man who seeks truth, but fails in his efforts may be excused, but the acceptance of truth by virtue of imitation or heredity by a man who is otherwise stubborn and arrogant has no value. A true Muslim, whether a male or a female, eagerly accepts truth wherever he or she may find it. As far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned, a Muslim shows no bias. He may go even to the farthest corner of the world for acquiring knowledge. His efforts to gain knowledge and to find truth are not confined to any particular period of his life nor to any territorial region. Nor does he insist to acquire knowledge from any particular person. The Holy Prophet has said that to seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim, whether a man or a woman. He has also asked the Muslims to receive it even from an idolater.

There is another saying of the Holy Prophet which exhorts the Muslims to seek it even if they have to go to China for that purpose. He is also reported to have said: *"Continue to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"*. Superficial and partial notions of the problems, blind imitation of the forefathers and submission to the absurd hereditary traditions, being contrary to the spirit of submission to truth, are censured by Islam and regarded as misleading.

Allah is Absolute Reality and Source of Life

Man is a realistic being. A new-born human child from the very first moments of its life, while looking for its mother's breast, seeks it as a reality. Gradually the body and the mind of the infant develop to the extent that it can distinguish between itself and other things. Though the new-born child's contact with other things is established through a series of its thoughts, it knows that the reality of the things is distinct from that of the thoughts which it entertains and uses as a medium only.

Integral Characteristics of the World

The realities which man can perceive through his senses and which we call the world, have

the following integral characteristics:

(i) Limitation

Everything perceptible, from the smallest particle to the biggest star has spatial and temporal limitations. Nothing can exist outside a particular space and a particular period of time.

Certain things occupy a bigger space and last longer while some others occupy a smaller space and last comparatively for a shorter time. But in the final analysis they are all limited to a particular portion of place and a particular period of time.

(ii) Change

Everything is subject to a change and is indurable. Nothing perceptible in the world is in a standstill state. It is either growing or decaying. A material and perceptible being throughout the period of its existence passes through a constant course of change as a part of its reality. It either gives something or takes something or gives as well as takes. In other words, it either takes something out of the reality of other things and adds it to its own reality or gives something out of its reality or performs both the actions. In any case, there is nothing that remains static. This characteristic also is common to all things existing in this world.

(iii) Attachment

Another characteristic of the perceptible things is their attachment. We find that they all are conditional. In other words the existence of each one of them is attached to and , conditional on the existence of one or more other things. None of them can exist if those other things do not exist. If we look deeply into the reality of the material and perceptible things, we will find that many 'ifs' are attached to their existence. We do not find a single perceptible thing which may be existing unconditionally and independently. The existence of everything is conditional on the existence of something else, and the existence of that something else in its turn is also conditional on the existence of something else, and so on.

(iv) Dependence

The existence of all our perceptible things depends on the fulfilment of the numerous conditions attached to it. The existence of each of these conditions again depends on the

fulfilment of a series of some other conditions. There is no perceptible thing which may exist independently, i.e. in the absence of the conditions on which its existence depends. Thus dependence pervades all existing things.

(v) Relativeness

All perceptible things are relative as regards to their existence a well as to their qualities. When we attribute to them greatness, power, beauty, antiquity and even existence, we say so in comparison to other things. When we say, for example, that the sun is very large, we mean that it is larger than the earth and other planets of our solar system. Otherwise this very sun is smaller than many other stars. Similarly when we say that such and such ship or such and such animal is powerful, we compare it with man or something weaker than man. Even the existence of a thing is comparative. Whenever we speak of any existence, perfection, wisdom, beauty, power or grandeur, we take into consideration a lower degree of that quality. We can always visualize a higher degree of it also and then a further higher degree. Each quality as compared to its higher degree is changed into its opposite. Existence becomes non-existence, perfection is changed into defectiveness. Similarly wisdom, beauty, greatness and grandeur are changed respectively into ignorance, ugliness and despicability.

The thinking power of man, the scope of which, contrary to that of the senses, is not confined to the exterior features, but also penetrates what is behind the screen of existence, tells us that existence is in no way confined to these perceptible things which are limited, changing, relative and dependent.

The scenery of existence which we observe appears on the whole to be self-existing and self-dependent. Hence there must be an everlasting, unconditional and ever-present absolute and infinite truth behind it on which everything must depend. Otherwise this scenery of existence could not stand so firmly. In other words nothing would have existed at all.

The Holy Qur'an describes Allah as Self-existing and Self-dependent, and thus reminds us that all existing things, being conditional and relative, are in need of a Self-existing truth to support and sustain them. Allah is Self-dependent because everything else depends on Him. He is Perfect, for everything else is hollow from within and needs a Truth which may fill it with existence.

The Holy Qur'an describes the perceptible things as 'signs'. In other words everything in its turn is a sign of an Infinite Being and His knowledge, power and will. From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an the world is like a book composed by a wise and sagacious being, every line and every word of which is a sign of the wisdom and sagacity of its author. From the point of view of the Holy Qur'an, the more a man comes to know the reality of the things, the more he

gets acquainted with Divine wisdom, power and blessings.

From one angle every natural science is a branch of cosmology. From another angle and from a deeper way of looking at things, it is a branch of the knowledge (recognition) of Allah.

To elucidate the Qur'anic point of view in this respect we quote here just one verse of the Holy Qur'an out of so many similar verses: ***"Surely in the creation of the heavens and the alternation of night and day, the ships which sail on the sea with (cargoes) beneficial to man, the water that Allah sends down from heaven with which He revives the earth after it is dead and replenishes it with all kinds of animal life, in the movement of the winds and in the clouds held between the sky and the earth, there are signs for the people who have sense."*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:164)

In this verse the Holy Qur'an invites the attention of the people to general cosmology, to the ship-building industry, to tourism and its financial advantages, to meteorology, to the

origin of winds and rain, to the movement of clouds, to biology and zoology. It regards the pondering on the philosophy of these sciences as something leading to the recognition of Allah.

Attributes of Allah

The Holy Qur'an says that Allah has all the attributes and characteristics of a perfect being.

"He has the most beautiful names." (Surah al-Hashr, 59:24).

"His is the sublime similitude in the heavens and in the earth" (Surah ar-Rum, 30:27)

As such Allah is Living, Almighty, All-Knowing, Master of His Will, Merciful, Guide, Creator, Wise, Forgiving and Just. There is no sublime quality which He does not possess.

On the other hand He is not a body nor a compound. He is neither weak nor cruel.

The first group of the sublime attributes of Allah, denoting His perfection is called His affirmative attributes and the second group of His attributes denoting His freedom from every kind of defect and imperfection is called His negative attributes. We both praise and glorify Allah. When we praise Him we mention His affirmative attributes and when glorify Him, we

say that He is free from all that is not worthy of Him. In both the cases we affirm His Knowledge to our own benefit and thus uplift ourselves.

Monotheism

Allah has no associate or partner. There is none like Him. It is basically impossible that there should be anyone like Him, for in that case we shall have two or more Gods instead of one. To be two, three or more is a characteristic of the limited and relative things. Plurality has no meaning in regard to an absolute and infinite being.

For example, we can have one child. We can also have two or more children. Similarly we can have one friend. We can also have two or more friends. A friend or a child is a limited being, and a limited being can have a like of him and can be multiplicable. But an infinite being is not multiplicable at all. The following example, though not adequate may be found useful for the purpose of elucidating the point.

In respect of the dimensions of the material world, that is the world which we can see and perceive, the scientists have two theories. Some of them maintain that the dimensions of the world are limited. In other words this perceivable world reaches a point where it ends. But some others are of the opinion that the dimensions of the material world have no middle, no beginning and no end. If we accept the theory that the material world is limited, a question arises as to whether it is one world or more than one? But if we maintain that this world has no limits, the question of the existence of another world becomes absurd. Whatever we may presume to be another world, it will either be identical with this world or a part of it.

This examples applies to the material world as well as the material beings which are limited, conditional and created. The reality of none of them is absolute, independent and self-existing. The material world, though limitless from the viewpoint of its dimensions, is limited from the viewpoint of its reality. But as its dimensions are limitless, we cannot presume the existence of another world.

Almighty Allah has an infinite existence. He is an absolute reality, and He pervades everything. No space or time is devoid of Him. He is closer to us than our jugular vein. Hence it is impossible that He should have a like of Him. We cannot even suppose the existence of another being like Him.

Furthermore, we see the signs of His wisdom and attention prevailing everywhere and pervading everything. We observe that one single will and one single system govern the entire

world. That shows that our world is unicentred, not multicentred.

Furthermore, had there been two or more Gods, evidently two or more wills would have applied to everything and two or more realities having a different centre would have existed in every existing thing. As a result everything would have become two or more things. This being an absurd proposition, in fact nothing would have existed at all. This is what the Holy Qur'an means when it says: ***"If there were therein (in the Universe) Gods besides Allah, then surely both the heavens and the earth had been discorded."*** (Surah al-Ambiya, 21:22)

Worship and Adoration

The acknowledgement of One Allah as the most perfect being, having the most sublime attributes and free from every defect and deficiency, and the recognition of His relation to the world consisting in His creatorship, guardianship, munificence, compassion and mercy, create a reaction in us which is called adoration and worship.

Worship is a kind of relationship which man establishes with his Creator. It consists of man's submission to Allah and extolling and thanking Him. It is a relationship which man can establish with his Creator only. The establishment of such a relationship with anyone else is neither conceivable nor permissible.

The acknowledgement of Allah as the only source of existence and the only Master and Lord of everything makes it incumbent on us not to associate any creature with Him in adoration. The Holy Qur'an insists that Allah alone should be worshipped. There is no sin more deadly than associating anyone or anything else with Him.

Now let us see what is worship and what kind of relationship is that which is peculiar to Allah and which cannot be established with any other being.

Definition of Worship

To make the meaning of worship clear and in order to define it correctly, it is necessary to mention two points as a prelude:

(i) Worship may consist either of words or of actions. The former kind consists of a series of words and sentences which we recite, such as praising Allah, the recitation of the Holy Qur'an or the recitation of the formulas normally recited while offering prayers, and pronouncing *'Labbayk'* during Hajj.

The worship which consists of actions is represented by such acts as standing, bowing and prostration in prayers, circum-ambulation of the Holy Ka'bah, and staying at Arafat and Mash'ar. Most of the acts of worship, such as prayers and pilgrimage (*Hajj*) comprise words and actions both.

(ii) Human acts are of two kinds. Some acts have no remote purpose. They are not performed as a symbol of something else, but they are performed for their own natural effects. For example, a farmer carries out the functions connected with farming in order to secure their natural results. He does not carry them out as a symbol or to express any feelings. The same is the case with a tailor when he is doing his tailoring. When we proceed to school, we have nothing in mind except reaching there. With this act we do not intend to convey any other purpose or meaning.

But there are acts which we perform as a symbol of a series of some other objects or in order to express our feelings. We lower our head as a sign of confirmation, we sit in the doorway as a sign of humility and bow to someone as a sign of reverence.

Most of the human acts are of the first kind and only a few of the second. Anyway, there are acts which are performed to express our feelings or to show some other objectives. These acts are used in place of words to express an intention.

Now keeping in mind the above two points, we may say that worship, whether it is performed by means of words or acts is a meaningful deed. Man by means of his devotion gives expression to a truth. Similarly by means of such acts as bowing, prostration, circumambulation etc. he wants to convey what he says when he pronounces devotionals and liturgy.

Spirit of Adoration and Worship

Through his worship, whether it is performed by means of words or acts, man conveys certain things:

(i) He praises Allah by pronouncing His peculiar attributes having a sense of absolute perfection, such as absolute knowledge, absolute power and absolute will. Absolute perfection means that His knowledge, power and will are not limited by or conditional on anything else and are a corollary of His total and complete independence.

(ii) He glorifies Allah and declares Him free from every defect and deficiency such as death, limitation, ignorance, helplessness, stinginess, cruelty etc.

(iii) He thanks Allah, considering Him to be the real source of everything good and of all bounties, and believing that all favours are received from Him alone. Others are only intermediaries appointed by Him.

(iv) He expresses total submission to Him and acknowledges that unconditional obedience is due to Him. He, being the Absolute Master of all that exists, is entitled to issue orders and we being slaves, it is our duty to obey Him.

(iv) In regard to His above attributes Allah has no associate or partner. None other than Him is absolutely perfect and none other than Him is absolutely free from every defect. None other than Him is the true source of all bounties and none other than Him deserves to be thanked for all of them. None other than Him deserves total submission and to be obeyed unconditionally. Every other obedience like that of the Prophet, the Imam, the lawful Muslim ruler, the parents and the teachers must culminate in His obedience and be subject to His good pleasure to be lawful. That is the appropriate response which a man should show to his Almighty Lord. Except in the case of Allah this kind of response is neither applicable nor permissible.

Degrees of Monotheism

Both monotheism and polytheism have degrees and stages. Unless a man passes through all the stages of monotheism, he cannot be a true monotheist.

I. Unity of the Essence of Allah

To acknowledge the unity of His essence means that Allah is One in His essence. The first impression of Allah which anybody has is that of His Self-dependence. He is a Being who is not dependent on any other being in any way. In the words of the Holy Qur'an, He is *Ghani* (the Absolute). Everything depends on Him and seeks His help. He is independent of everything. The Holy Qur'an says:

"O men, it is you who stand in need of Allah. As for Allah, He is above all need, worthy of praise." (Surah al-Fatir, 35:15)

The philosophers describe Him as Self-existent or as a being whose existence is necessary.

The second impression of Allah which everybody has is that of His creatorship. He is the Creator and the ultimate source of all the existing things. All things are "from Him". He is not from anything. According to the philosophical terminology, He is the First cause.

This is the first conception of Allah which everybody has. Everybody thinks of Allah, and while thinking of Him, he has this conception in his mind. Then he decides whether there, really exists a truth, which is not dependent on any other truth, and from which originate all other truths.

Unity of essence means that this truth is not multiplicable, and has no like of it. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Nothing is similar to Him." (Surah ash-Shura, 42:11)

"And there is none comparable to Him." (Surah at-Tawhid, 112:4)

The rule that an existing being is always a member of a species, is applicable to the created beings only. For example, if is a member of the human species, we can presume that may be other members of this species. But no such thing be presumed in the case of the Self-existing Being. He is above all such notions.

The Self-existing truth being one, this world has only one source and one end. It has neither originated from various sources nor will it return to various sources. It has originated from one source and one truth. The Holy Qur'an says:

" Say: Allah is the Creator of everything." (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:16)

Everything will return to the same source and the same truth:

"Do not all things reach Allah at last?" (Surah ash-Shura, 42:53)

In other words, the whole universe has one centre, one pole and one orbit.

The relation between Allah and the world is that of the Creator and the created, that is the relation of the cause and the effect, not that kind of relation which exists between light and lamp or between human consciousness and man. It is true that Allah is not separate from the world. He is with everything. The Holy Qur'an says: ***"He is with you wherever you are."*** (Surah al-Hadid, 57:4)

Anyhow, the non-separation of Allah from the world does not mean that He is to the world as light is to a lamp or as consciousness is to a body. Had it been so, Allah would have been the effect of the world, not the cause of it, as light is the effect of a lamp. Similarly the non-separation of Allah from the world does not mean that Allah, the world and man, have the same orientation and they all move and live with the same will and spirit. All these are the attributes of the created and non-self-existing beings. Allah is free from them. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, from that which they ascribe to Him." (Surah as-Saffat, 37:180)

II. Unity of the Attributes of Allah

The unity of His attributes means to recognize that the essence and the attributes of Allah are identical and that His various attributes are not separate from each other. The unity of essence means the negation of there being any peer or like of Allah and the unity of His attributes means the negation of any kind of multiplicity or plurality within His essence. Allah has all the attributes implying the perfection of majesty and beauty, but His attributes have no aspect really separate from Him. The separation of the essence from the attributes and the separation of the attributes from each other, are the characteristics of the limitation of existence, and are not conceivable in the case of infinite existence. Multiplicity, combination and the separation of the essence and the attributes are inconceivable in the case of the Absolute Being. Like the unity of the Divine essence, the unity of the Divine attributes is an Islamic doctrine and one of the most valuable human ideas which has exclusively crystallized in the Shi'ah school. We here quote a passage from the first sermon of the Nahjul Balaghah[13] which corroborates as well as explains this idea:

"All praise is due to Allah, who cannot be adequately praised by any rhetoricians, whose blessings cannot be counted by any enumerators, whom due homage cannot be paid by the most assiduous, who cannot be fully comprehended howsoever one may try, who cannot be reached by intelligence howsoever deep it may go, whose attributes are not limited by any limitation. There exist no words to describe Him fully."

As we see, in the above passage the boundlessness of the Divine attributes has been emphasized. In the same sermon after a few sentences Imam Ali says:

"Perfect devotion to Him means to deny the imputation of attributes *to Him, for the person to whom an attribute is imputed, bears witness that he is different from the attribute imputed to him and every attribute of him bears witness that it is different from the person to whom it has been imputed. He who imputes an attribute to Allah compares Him (to something and he who compares him. . ."*. (See: Sermon - 1, p. 137, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)

In the first passage it has been affirmed that Allah has attributes (whose attributes are not limited by any limitation). In the second passage also it is confirmed that He has attributes, but instruction has been given to impute no attributes to Him. The wording of these passages shows that the attributes which He has are unlimited like the limitlessness of His own self, that they are identical with His essence, and the attributes from which He is free are those which are limited and separate from His essence and from each other. Thus the unity of the Divine tributes means to acknowledge the unity of Allah's essence and His attributes.

III. Unity of the Work of Allah

Unity of His work means to recognize that the world with all its systems, ways, causes and effects is the work of Allah alone and has originated from His will. Nothing in the world is self-existing. Everything depends on Him. In the words of the Holy Qur'an, He is the sustainer of the whole world. The existing things are not independent with regard to their effect and causation. As a result, as Allah has no partner in his essence, similarly He has no partner in His work. Every agent and every cause owes its existence and effectiveness to Him and depends on Him. All power as well as ability to do things belong to Him alone.

Man is one of the existing things and hence a creation of Allah. Like other things he is effective as far as his own work is concerned and unlike of them, he is the master of his own destiny. But Allah has in no way delegated His powers to him. Thus he has not got complete discretion.

"By the power of Allah I stand and sit".

The belief that any being, whether man or a being other than man, has a complete discretion, amounts to believing that being to be a partner of Allah as far as independence of activity is concerned. As independence in activity amounts to independence in essence it is contrary to Allah's unity of essence, what to say of His unity of work.

"All praise is due to Allah who has taken no spouse nor a child. He has no partner in His sovereignty, nor has He a helper to help Him out of weakness. Therefore glorify Him a great deal." (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:111)

IV. Unity in Worship

The three degrees of monotheism mentioned above are theoretical and a matter of creed. They are to be recognized and acknowledged. But the unity in worship is a practical matter. It is a form of 'being' and 'becoming'. The above degrees of monotheism involved right thinking. This degree is the stage of becoming righteous. The theoretical stage of monotheism means to have a perfect view. The practical stage of it means to move forward to attain perfection. The theoretical monotheism means to comprehend the Divine oneness and the practical monotheism means man's becoming one. The theoretical monotheism is the stage of seeing and the practical monotheism is the stage of going. Before we further explain the practical monotheism, it is necessary to mention one more point about the theoretical monotheism. The

question is whether it is possible to know Allah together with the unity of His essence, the unity of His attributes and the unity of His work, and if possible, whether such a knowledge is conducive to human weal and bliss; or out of the various degrees and stages of monotheism it is only practical monotheism that is useful.

As far as the possibility of gaining such a knowledge is concerned, we have discussed this problem in our books, Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism. As far its being useful or otherwise, that depends on our own conception of man and his weal and bliss. The modern wave of materialistic thinking has induced even the believers in Allah to consider the questions related to His knowledge to be of little use. They regard such questions as a kind of mental exercise and an escape from the practical problems of life. But a Muslim who believes that the reality of man is not his physical reality alone, but his true reality is his spiritual reality and that the essence of human spirit is the essence of his knowledge, sanctity and purity, knows well that the so called theoretical monotheism, besides being the basis of practical monotheism, is in itself a psychological perfection of the highest order. It uplifts man, leads him towards the Divine Truth and makes him perfect.

"To Him good words ascend and the pious deeds does He exalt." (Surah al-Fatir, 35:10)

Humanity of man depends on his knowledge of Allah.

Man's knowledge is not something separate from him. The more man attains knowledge of the universe, its system and its source, the more will develop his humanity, the 50% substance of which consists of knowledge.

From the point of view of Islam, especially the Shi'ah doctrine, there is not the least doubt that the attainment of the knowledge of Allah, irrespective of its practical and social effects, is in itself a goal of humanity.

Now we take up the question of practical monotheism:

Practical monotheism or unity in worship means to worship Allah alone. In other words to be single-minded in respect of the worship of Allah. Later we will explain that from the viewpoint of Islam, worship has a number of degrees. The most clear degree of it is the performance of the rites related to glorification and exaltation of Allah. The performance of such rites in respect of anyone other than Allah, means total exit from the pale of Islam. Anyhow, from the viewpoint of Islam worship is not confined to this degree alone. Every form of spiritual orientation and accepting something as one's spiritual ideal is included in worship. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Have you seen him who has chosen for his god his own lust?" (Surah al-Furqan, 25:43)

He who obeys someone whom Allah has not allowed to be obeyed and submits to him totally, worships that person: ***"They have taken their rabbis and their monks as their lords besides Allah."*** (Surah at-Tawbah, 9:31)

"And similarly none of us shall take others as our lords besides Allah." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:64)

Thus practical monotheism or unity in worship means to accept Allah alone as fit to be obeyed unconditionally, regard Him alone as one's ideal and the direction of one's conduct and to reject all others and consider them to be unfit to be obeyed unconditionally or regarded as one's ideal. Practical monotheism means to bow to Allah alone, to rise for Him, to live for him and to die for Him.

"(Prophet) Ibrahim said: I have set my face earnestly to Him who has created the Heavens and the earth. I am not a pagan. My prayers and my sacrifice, my living and my dying all are for Allah, the Lord of the universe. He has no partner. So have I been commanded, and I am the first to submit to Him."(Surah al-An'am, 6:79 & 163- 164)

This monotheism of Prophet Ibrahim is the practical monotheism. This is what the creed, *'There is no god but Allah"*, visualizes.

[13] The Islamic Seminary has published this book in English language under the caption, Peak of Eloquence, 1984.

Man and Unification

The unification of the existential reality of man in a psychological system in consonance with his human and evolutionary tendencies and similarly the unification of human society in a harmonious and evolutionary social system, are the questions which have always engaged the attention of mankind. As opposed to unification is the polarization of individual personality and its split into discordant segments, and the division of society into conflicting groups and classes. The question is: what is to be done to ensure the harmonious development of human personality both from psychological and social points of view? In this respect there are three theories: materialistic theory, idealistic theory and realistic theory.

I. Materialistic Theory

The upholders of this theory think of matter only and give no importance to soul. They claim that what splits an individual psychologically and a society socially and causes discord and incongruity is the existence of the system of private property. Man by nature is a social being. In the beginning of history he led a collective life, and was not conscious of his individual existence. At that time he had a collective spirit and a collective feeling. His life depended on hunting and every body could obtain his means of living from the river and the forest according to his requirements. There was no question of surplus production till man discovered the art of cultivation. With it the possibility of surplus production and the possibility of some peoples' doing work and some other's simply eating without doing any work appeared. That was the development which led to the practice of ownership. The private ownership of the sources of production like water and land and the production tools like plough, did away with the collective spirit and split the society which was so far living as one unit, into 'haves' and 'have nots'. The society which lived as 'We' took the shape of 'I'. As a result of the appearance of ownership man became unconscious of his own reality as a social being. Previously he felt that he was just a man like others. Now he regarded himself as an owner instead of a man. Thus he became unconscious of himself and began to deteriorate.

Only by abolishing the system of private ownership man can once more regain his moral and social unity and his mental and social health. The compulsory movement of history is already taking place in this direction. Private properties, which have turned human unity into plurality, and collectivity into dispersal, are like the turrets mentioned by the Persian mystic poet, Mowlavi in a beautiful simile. He says that the turrets and pinnacles divide one single and extensive sunshine into compartments by introducing shadow pieces in between. Of

course Mowlavi visualizes a gnostic truth, that is the emergence of plurality from unity and its ultimate return to unity. But with a little twist, this simile can also be used to illustrate the Marxist theory of socialism.

II. Idealistic Theory

This theory gives importance to man's spirit and his relation to his inner self only. According to this theory, it is true that the relation between man and the material things does away with unity, causes plurality and dismembers collectivity.

It leads the individual to psychological split and divides society into classes. But it is also to be remembered that in the case of the attachment of one thing to another, it is the latter that causes the split and dismemberment of the former. Hence the attachment of such things as property, wife and position to man is not the cause of his psychological split and the dismemberment of society. In contrast, it is the heart-felt inner attachment of man to the material things that causes this split and dismemberment. Ownership has not alienated man from himself and society. It is his 'being owned' that has alienated him. What dismembers his individuality from moral and social point of view is not 'my property', 'my wife' and 'my position'. It is 'my being property', 'my being wife' and 'my being a position' which dismembers his individuality.

To change 'I' into 'we' it is not necessary to sever the relation of the things with man. It is the relation of man with the things that should be severed. Release man from the bondage of the things, so that he may return back to his human reality. Give man his moral and spiritual freedom. To release things from his ownership will serve no useful purpose. The moral and social unification of man is a matter of spiritual education and training. It is not an economic question. What is required is inner development of man, not his outer curtailment. Man is first an animal and then a human being. He is an animal by nature and a human being by acquisition. Man can regain his latent humanity by correct education. So long as he does not gain it, he remains an animal by nature and there is no question of the unity of his spirit and life.

It is unhumanistic to consider material things to be the cause of the split and coalescence of man and to think that with their division man is divided and with their unification he is united, and that his moral and social personality is subservient to economic and production situation. Such notions are the result of not knowing man and not believing in his humanity and his faculties of understanding and will.

Furthermore, it is impossible to sever man's private relation with other things totally. Even if his relation with wealth and property is severed, it is not possible to do so in the case of wife, children and family. Is it possible to introduce socialism in this field also, and to establish sexual communism? If this is possible, then why are the countries, which abolished private

property long ago, still sticking to private family system? Suppose the natural family system is also socialized, what will be done about jobs, positions, prestige and honour? Is it possible to distribute these things also equally? What will be done about the physical and mental abilities of the individuals? These relationships are an integral part of the existence of every individual and are not separable from him.

III. Realistic Theory

According to this theory, what splits and divides man from individual and social point of view is neither man's relation with the things nor the relation of the things with man. Man's bondage neither originates from his ownership nor from his being owned. This theory gives first importance to such factors as education, training, revolution, thinking, ideology and spiritual freedom. It believes that man is neither a purely material being nor a purely spiritual being. This worldly life and the next worldly life are closely interconnected with each other. The body and the soul interact.

A struggle should be made against the factors causing psychological split with the help of faith and unity in worship, and a war should be waged against discrimination, injustice, deprivation, oppression, suffocation, and false gods.

This is the Islamic way of thinking. As soon as Islam appeared, it started a movement and began to bring about a revolution. But it never said that if discrimination and injustice were removed or private property was abolished, everything would be all right. Nor did it say if you reformed yourself from within, had nothing to do with the external world, and improved your moral qualities, society would automatically be reformed. Besides other things Islam raised the slogan of internal monotheism to be secured through jihad and a struggle against social inequities. The following verse which shines on the firmament of human unity and which was incorporated by the Holy Prophet in his letters addressed to the heads of various countries, manifests the all-round realism of Islam:

"Let us come to an agreement between us and you: that we will worship none but Allah, that we will associate none with Him." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:64)

Up to this point this verse deals with the unity of man through faith, a common ideal and attaining spiritual freedom. Thereafter it says:

"None of us shall take others as Lords besides Allah"

Should we act according to this teaching of Islam we will not be divided into masters and slaves, and will be able to forestall wrong social relationships that lead to discrimination.

Following the chaos and agitation during the caliphate of Uthman leading to his murder,

people rushed to pledge their allegiance to Imam Ali, who was forced to accept the responsibilities of caliphate against his personal liking. It was his legal duty which compelled him to accept the caliphate. He describes his personal dislike and his legal duty in the following words:

"Had not the people gathered round me, had not the presence of the helper left me no choice and had not Allah taken a promise from the learned not to agree to a situation in which people were divided into the oppressors having too much and the oppressed having too little, I would not have cared who becomes a caliph and my attitude would have remained the same as it had been throughout". (See: Peak of Eloquence, Sermon - 7)

We all know that Imam Ali after taking over his assignment gave the foremost importance to two things. One was the spiritual and moral reform of the people and the dissemination of Divine knowledge, the examples of which we find in Nahjul Balaghah, and the other was his struggle against social discrimination. He was neither contented with inner reform nor regarded the mere social reform as adequate. Islam had in one hand the programme of educating the people and of preaching faith in Allah in order to secure individual and social unity of mankind, and in other it had a sword in order to sever the unbalanced human relationships, to break up class distinctions and to knock down the false gods.

The classless Islamic society means a just society in which there is no discrimination, no deprivation, no tyranny and no false gods.

It does not mean a society in which there is no disparity, for the absence of disparity is in itself a form of injustice. There is a difference between discrimination and disparity. In the creational system there exists disparity, which gives it variety and beauty, but there exists no discrimination in it. The perfect Islamic society is a society that is against discrimination, but is not opposed to disparity. Islamic society is a society of equality and brotherhood. But its equality is positive and not negative. It takes into consideration the natural differences of the individuals and does not deprive anyone of his acquired distinctions. It establishes positive equality by providing equal opportunities to all and by abolishing unjust eminence and imaginary superiority.

The negative equality is similar to the equality narrated in a legendary tale. A tyrant used to live in the hills. He received the passers-by as his guests. When the guest retired for the night, he was required to sleep on a particular bed. If by chance the body of the guest was equal to the size of the bed, it was all right. But woe to the poor guest if his body was not equal to it! If it was taller, the servants of the tyrant chopped off a part of it from either side and if it was shorter, they pulled it from both sides to make it fit in the bed. The result in both the cases can easily be imagined.

The positive equality is like the equal treatment meted out by an affectionate teacher to all his

pupils. If in a test the answers of all of them are correct, he awards them equal marks. If their answers vary, he awards each of them as many marks as he deserves.

The Islamic society is a natural society. It is neither discriminative nor a society of negative equality. The Islamic principle is 'work according to one's ability, entitlement according to one's work'.

In a discriminative society relations of people are based on subjugation and forcible exploitation. But in a natural society there is no exploitation and nobody is allowed to live at the cost of others. The relations of people are based on reciprocal service. All work freely according to their ability and within the scope of their potentiality. All serve each other. In other words bilateral use of services is the rule. The more a man is capable and the more forceful personality he has, the more he attracts other forces to himself. For example, the more knowledge a man has, the more seekers of knowledge he attracts to himself and uses their services. The more technical know-how a man the more people have to work in accordance with his instructions. That is why the Holy Qur'an which opposes the existence of the lords and the domineered in society, acknowledges the existence of natural disparity and different grades of capabilities created by Allah. It also supports the relationship of "bilateral" use of services. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Is it they who apportion their Lord's Mercy? We have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of the world, and raised some of them above some others in rank so that some of them may take labour from some others; and the Mercy of your Lord is better than the wealth they amass" (Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:32)

A very fine point which can be inferred from this verse is that the disparity in endowments is not unilateral. The people not divided into two classes, viz. one of these having natural endowments and the other of those bereft of them. Had it been so, Allah would have said: "We have raised some of them in rank so that they may take labour from others". But He has not said so. He has said that He has raised some of them in rank above some others, so that some of them use the services of some of others. That means that all have some or other endowments and all utilize the services of each other. In other words, both the endowments and services are bilateral

Another point is that the word *'Sukhriyya'* used in this verse begins with the vowel point of U (su) and means employment and utilization. The same word has been used at two other places in the Holy Qur'an with the vowel point of 'I' (si) and there, as the most of the commentators point out, means mockery.

This verse describes the natural and inborn relation of men in their social life, and says that their relationship is such that they all use the services of each other. It may be said that this is the most important verse from the viewpoint of the exposition of the social philosophy of

Islam.

Bayzawi in his well-known commentary on the Holy Qur'an and following his example, Allam Fayz in his book *As-Safi*, explaining the verse says: "The verse, *'so that some of them may take labour from some others'*, means that all men utilize the services of each other to meet their needs. This relationship is a means of creating in men a spirit of good will and affection towards each other so that the affairs of the world may go on smoothly"

There is a hadith (tradition) also which says that this verse means that Allah has created men in such a way that they all are in need of each other.

Though men depend on each other to satisfy their natural needs, there is still an adequate scope of free competition in society. In contrast, the life of the gregarious animals is based on a compulsory relationship. Therefore man's sociality is different from that of the bees or the termites. Their life is governed by inexorable laws, and provides no field for competition. They have no possibility of going up or coming down. Man, besides being social, is endowed with a sort of freedom.

Human society is a field of competitive progress and development. Any restrictions placed on the individual freedom in this respect prevent the blooming of human faculties.

The model man of the materialistic school, though has few external restrictions, is unable to attain inner freedom. He is like a bird which has no feathers though not confined within a cage, and as such is unable to fly. The model man of the idealistic school has inner freedom but is tied externally. He is like a bird having feathers, but the feet of which are tied firmly. But the man of the realistic school is like a bird which has feathers, the feet of which are free and which can fly without any difficulty.

It is clear from the above that practical monotheism, whether it is individual or social, means to be unitarian in the worship of Allah and to reject every other kind of heartfelt adoration such as the adoration of one's base desires, adoration of money, adoration of honour and privileges etc. In the case of society it also means to be unitarian in the observance of fair play and justice and the rejection of all false values, discrimination and unfairness. So long as the individual and society are not unitarian, they cannot attain happiness and prosperity, and they cannot be unitarian unless they are righteous. The Holy Qur'an describes the division of man's personality and his bewilderment under the polytheistic system and his attainment of unity and purpose under the monotheistic system in the following words:

"Allah coins a similitude of a man who is owned by several part-owners, quarrelling, and another man belonging wholly to one man. Are these two alike?" (Surah az-Zumar, 39:29)

Under the polytheistic system man is like a straw being tossed every moment by the waves of

a sea in a different direction. Under the monotheistic system he is like a boat fully equipped with guiding apparatus, moving in a regular manner under the command of a well-intentioned captain.

BACK

Chapter 10

NEXT

Degrees of Polytheism

As monotheism has degrees, so has polytheism. By comparing the two we can know both monotheism and polytheism better, for comparison of opposites makes the things clear. History shows that different kinds of polytheism have always existed side by side with monotheism preached by the Prophets.

I. Belief in the Plurality of Divine Essence

Certain nations have had belief in two (dualism), three (trinity) or more original and eternal sources independent of each other. They have believed that the world is multi-polar and multi-centred. What has been the root of such ideas? Is each one of these ideas a reflection of the social conditions of the people concerned? For example, when the people believed in two original and eternal sources and two original orbits of the world, their society was divided into two different segments, and when they believed in three sources and three gods, their social system was trilateral. In other words, in every case the social system has reflected on the minds of the people in the form of a doctrine. Is it also a fact that the Prophets preached monotheism only when the social system tended to be unicentered?

This view stems from a philosophical theory which we discussed earlier. According to this theory, spiritual and intellectual aspects of man and the moral and conventional tendencies of society such as sciences, law, philosophy, religion and art are subordinate to man's social systems, especially to his economic system, and have no independent position. We have already refuted this theory. As we believe in the intrinsic value of thinking, ideology and humanity, we consider such sociological views in respect of monotheism and polytheism to be baseless.

Anyhow, there is another question which should not be confused with this theory. Sometimes a religious creed is mis-used in a social system. For example, the idolatry system of the pagan Quraysh was a device of safeguarding the interests of the Arab usurers. The Abu Sufyans, the Abu Jahls and the Walids bin Mughirah did not have the slightest belief in the idols. They defended them to preserve the existing social system only. When the anti-usury monotheistic system of Islam emerged their defence of the idols took a serious turn. As the pagan usurers became apprehensive of their own ruin, they advanced the plea of the sanctity of the popular beliefs. The Holy Qur'an has alluded to this point at a number of places, especially in the story of Fir'awn and Prophet Musa. Anyhow it must be understood that this question is quite

different from the view that economic system is the infrastructure of any doctrinal system and every intellectual system is the reaction of an economic and social system.

What the school of the Prophets vehemently rejects is the idea that every ideology is necessarily a crystallized form of the social desires which in turn are created by the economic conditions. According to materialistic theory, the monotheistic school of the Prophets is in itself a crystallized form of the social desires and was produced by the economic needs of the time of the Prophets. The development of the implements of production originated a number of social desires which were explained through the monotheistic idea. The Prophets were in fact the expounders of this social and economic need. There is a universal rule that every idea and every belief has an economic infrastructure. This rule applies to the idea of monotheism also.

As the Holy Qur'an believes that the innate nature of man is a basic dimension of his existence, and maintains that this innate human nature initiates a number of desires which can be met only by monotheism, it considers the monotheistic call of the Prophets to be meeting a great human need. It does not believe in any other infrastructure of monotheism, nor does it regard the class conditions as a factor compelling the emergence of any idea or a belief. Had the class conditions been the infrastructure of man's belief, everybody would have been bound to incline to the direction that his class position required. In this case there would have been no choice in the matter of belief for anybody. Neither the Fir'awns could be blamed nor their opponents could be praised, for a man can be blamed or praised only when he has a choice to be what he is not. Otherwise he can neither be blamed nor can he be praised. A negro or a white man cannot be blamed or praised for the colour of his skin. But we know that man is not bound to think in accordance with his class. He can revolt against his class interests, as Prophet Musa did, though he was brought up under Fir'awnic luxuries. This proves that the question of any infrastructure and superstructure besides depriving man of his humanity, is no more than a myth.

Anyhow, this does not mean that material and intellectual conditions do not affect each other. What is denied is their being infrastructure and superstructure respectively. Otherwise the Holy Qur'an itself says:

"Surely man is rebellious when he thinks that he is independent." (Surah 'Alaq, 96:6 - 7)

The Holy Qur'an accepts that the rich and the powerful play a special role in opposing the Prophets whereas the downtrodden and the underprivileged play their role in supporting them. But because of their human nature, they all are capable of accepting the truth.

From spiritual point of view the only difference is that one group in spite of its human nature, has to cross a great barrier before it may be persuaded to accept the truth for it has to relinquish its existing material gains and unjust distinctions, whereas the other group has no

such obstacles. In the words of Salman, (the distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet) those who have a light burden are saved. Not only that, but the latter group has a positive incentive. Consequent to its accepting the truth its living conditions improve and its life becomes easier. That is why the majority of the followers of the Prophets has consisted of the underprivileged. Anyhow, the Prophets have always been able to recruit some of their followers from the privileged classes and have been able to persuade them to fight against their own class and its class interests. The Holy Qur'an does not think that the Fara'ina and the Abu Sufyans defended the polytheistic system of their times and provoked the religious sentiments of their people against Prophet Musa and the Last Prophet simply because they on account of their class position could not think of doing otherwise or because their class requirements had crystallized in the form of polytheistic beliefs. The Holy Qur'an maintains that they were perfidious. By virtue of their Divine innate nature they believed in Allah and realized the truth, but still they rejected it and opposed it. The Holy Qur'an says:

"They denied Our signs, though their souls acknowledged them." (Surah an-Naml, 27:14)

The Holy Qur'an describes their disbelief as the denial of what their hearts believed. In other words, their denial was a sort of revolution against their own conscience.

In this connection there exists a great misunderstanding. Some people maintain that the Holy Qur'an endorses the Marxist theory of historical materialism. We will discuss this question in detail when we undertake the study of society and history in another section of this book. This theory is neither in conformity with the actual reality of history, nor is defensible from scientific point of view.

Anyway, a belief in several sources is a belief in the plurality of the Divine essence, and is diametrically opposed to the belief in its unity. Advancing an argument in this connection the Holy Qur'an says:

"If there were therein deities besides Allah, then surely the heavens and the earth would have been disordered." (Surah al-Ambiya, 21:22)

A belief in the plurality of the Divine essence puts the holder of such a belief outside the pale of Islam which totally rejects this belief in every form of it.

II. Plurality of Creatorship

Some people acknowledge that Allah is peerless. They recognize Him to be the only source of the world. Nevertheless, as far as His creatorship is concerned, they associate some creatures with Him. For example, some of them hold that evils have been created by some other beings, not by Allah. This kind of belief is also tantamount to the belief in the plurality of creatorship, and is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of the unity of Divine actions. Anyhow, a belief

in the plurality of creatorship has several degrees. Some of them do not amount to open polytheism and as such do not put the holders of the belief concerned outside the pale of Islam.

III. Plurality of Divine Attributes

This being a subtle question is not raised by the common people. Only some thinkers lacking deep insight have given a consideration to it. Among the scholastic theologians the Asha'irah believe in the plurality of the Divine attributes. As this belief does not amount to open polytheism, it does not put its holders outside the pale of Islam.

IV. Plurality of Worship

There have been many peoples which have worshipped pieces of wood, stone or some metal or they have worshipped an animal, a star, a tree or a river. Formerly this kind of polytheism was common. It is still found in several parts of the world. The plurality of worship is the opposite of the unity of worship. All the degrees of polytheism mentioned previously were the various kinds of theoretical polytheism. They may be described as false cognition. The plurality of worship is practical polytheism. It is a sort of false 'being' and false 'becoming'.

Anyhow, practical polytheism also has so many degrees. The highest of them is that which puts a man outside the pale of Islam. It is called plain polytheism. But there are many kinds of hidden polytheism. Islam in the course of its programme of practical monotheism fights against all of them. Certain varieties of polytheism are so minute and hidden that they can hardly be observed. The Holy Prophet has said: "Polytheism is more imperceptible than the crawl of an ant on a smooth stone in the darkness of night. The slightest degree of it is to prefer any act of injustice to an act of justice."

Religiousness is nothing but to love and hate for the sake of Allah. Allah says: **"If you have love for Allah, then follow me so that He may love you."** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:31)

Islam regards any kind of self-indulgence, love of position, honour and money as well as hero-worship as a sort of polytheism. In the story of the conflict between Prophet Musa and Fir'awn the Holy Qur'an describes the tyrannical rule of Fir'awn over the children of Isra'il as the imposition of devotion and slavery.

Prophet Musa is described to have said in reply to Fir'awn: **"The favour for which you reproach me is that you have enslaved the children of Isra'il (and imposed on them the devotion to you)."** (Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:22)

It is evident that the children of Isra'il neither worshipped Fir'awn nor were they his slaves. They were only under his tyrannical domination as in another place Fir'awn himself is

described to have said: "Surely we have full power over them". Still at another place Fir'awn is described to have said: "Their people (the people of Prophet Musa and Harun) are our slaves and devoted to us)". In this verse the word 'our' is significant. (See 7:127)

Even if we presume that the children of Israil were forced to worship Fir'awn, it is unimaginable that they worshipped all his people.

They were forced only to submit to and obey Fir'awn and his nobles.

In a sermon Imam Ali, describing the pitiable plight of the children of Isra'il under the tyrannical rule of Fir'awn, says: "The Fari'ina had enslaved them". He explains their enslavement in the following words: "They tortured them and made their life bitter. The children of Isra'i1 lived under most oppressive conditions and could find no way to escape from persecution and humiliation or to defend themselves". (See Nahjul Balagha)

The verse that promises vicegerency of Allah to the believers is the most express one in this connection. It says:

"Allah has promised to make those of you who believe and do the good deeds, successors in the land, as He had made those before them, and will establish their religion which He has chosen for them and change their fear into security. They will worship Me, and ascribe nothing as a partner to Me. Those who disbelieve henceforth are the wicked indeed." (Surah an-Nur, 24:55)

This verse shows that when a rightful government and Divine vicegerency are established, the believers get rid of the obedience of every tyrant. The verse says that they worship Allah alone and ascribe no partners to Him. This shows that from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an the obedience of the ruler is an act of the worship of Allah provided he is obeyed for the sake of Him. Otherwise it is a polytheistic act.

It is astonishing that forced obedience which is not morally regarded as an act of worship, is considered to be so from a social angle. The Holy Prophet says:

"When the number of the children of al-'As (ancestor of Marwan bin Hakam and most of the Umayyad caliphs) reaches thirty, they will seize the property of Allah and turn it into their private property, will enslave the bondmen of Allah, and will interfere in His religion".

Here the Holy Prophet has hinted at the oppression and despotism of the Umayyads. Evidently the Umayyads did not ask people to worship them, nor did they make them slaves of theirs. They only imposed on them their despotic rule. The Holy Prophet through his Divine foresight calls this position enslavement and a sort of polytheism.

Boundary Between Monotheism and Polytheism

What constitutes the line of demarcation between monotheism and polytheism (including both theoretical and practical forms of them)? Which idea is monotheistic and which is polytheistic? What kind of action constitutes practical monotheism and what kind of it constitutes practical polytheism?

Is it polytheistic to believe in the existence of anything other than Allah? Does the unity of His essence require us not to believe that there exists anything in any form besides Him not even as His creation? (a sort of ontological monism)

It is obvious that the created things are the work of Allah. They cannot be considered to be His rivals. Allah's creations are the manifestation of His exuberant power. A belief in the existence of a created thing as a thing created by Allah is, not contrary to monotheism. It is rather complementary to it. Hence the line of demarcation between monotheism and polytheism cannot be the existence or the non-existence of anything other than Allah.

Does a belief in the causation of the created things amount to polytheism or the plurality of creatorship? Does a belief in the unity of the Divine work necessarily imply that we should reject the system of causation and ascribe every effect direct to Allah? For example, should we believe that fire has no role in burning, water has no role in quenching thirst, rain has no role in making plants grow and medicines have no role in curing, and that it is Allah direct who burns, quenches thirst, makes the plants grow and cures the diseased. Is it true that the presence or absence of other factors makes no difference? At the most it can be said that Allah usually performs His acts in the presence of certain factors. If a person has the habit of putting a cap on his head when he wants to write a letter, it cannot be said that the presence or absence of a cap has any effect on his letter writing. The only thing is that he does not like to write a letter without a cap. According to this view, the same is the nature of the presence and the absence of the things called causes and factors. Should we believe otherwise, we will be ascribing partners to Allah in His work. That is the view of the Asha'irah and the Predestinarians.

This view again is not correct. Just as a belief in the existence of a created thing is not tantamount to the belief in the plurality of the Divine essence, but is complementary to the belief in the oneness of Allah, similarly a belief in the causation system is not tantamount to the belief in the plurality of creatorship. As the created things are not self-existing, similarly they are not independent with regard to their effectiveness. As all existing things depend on Allah for their existence and effectiveness, there is no question of the plurality of creatorship. The belief in the causation system is actually complementary to the belief in the creatorship of Allah. It certainly would have amounted to polytheism if we believed that the created things were independent from the viewpoint of their effectiveness, or believed that the relation between Allah and the world was that of a manufacturer and the things manufactured. A

vehicle initially needs a manufacturer to manufacture it, but when it is completed, it operates according to its own mechanism. Even if the maker dies, the vehicle will continue to work. Should we think that the relation of the natural factors, such as water, rain, energy, heat, earth, plants and man to Allah is of a similar nature, as sometimes the Mu'tazilah tend to think, the idea would certainly lead to polytheism.

The created things depend on their Creator for their effectiveness as much as they depend on Him for their origin, existence and survival. The world is His creation and a blessing from Him. It depends on Him totally. Hence the effectiveness of the created things is actually the effectiveness of Allah and their creativeness is His creativeness and an extension of His work. Even it may be said that to describe the belief that the created things have a role in the affairs of the world as a polytheistic idea, is in itself a polytheistic idea, for it implies an unconscious belief in the independence of the existing things, as is betrayed by the presumption that a belief in their effectiveness will amount to the belief in two centres. Anyhow, a belief or an unbelief in the causation of the things besides Allah is not the line of demarcation between monotheism and polytheism.

Is a belief in the supernatural power of an existing thing whether an angel or a man such as an Imam or a Prophet polytheistic, while a belief in the power and effectiveness of a Prophet or an Imam etc. within the normal limits is not so? Similarly is it also a polytheistic idea to have a belief in the power and effectiveness of a man who has died, for a dead man is apparently nothing more than inorganic matter? Obviously from the viewpoint of natural laws inorganic matter has neither consciousness, nor power nor will. As such to believe that a dead man has perception or to greet a dead man, to show respect to him, and to call and implore him for anything, all should be polytheistic acts, for they mean ascribing supernatural power to a being other Allah.

Similarly it also should be polytheistic to believe that the earth of a particular place is effective in curing diseases or that prayer is granted at a particular place, for such a belief is tantamount to believing in the existence of a supernatural power in a lifeless thing. As all that is natural, is identifiable, experimentable and perceptible, to believe in the effectiveness of the things cannot be polytheistic as supposed by the Asha'irah, but it is certainly polytheistic to believe in the supernatural power of the created things.

Existence has two sectors: physical and metaphysical. The metaphysical sector is the exclusive domain of Allah, while the physical sector is the exclusive domain of the created things or is a domain common to Allah and the created things both. A number of functions having a metaphysical aspect, such as giving life, causing death, providing means of living etc., along with some normal and ordinary functions, fall within the exclusive domain of Allah. That is the position as far as theoretical monotheism is concerned.

As for practical monotheism, any spiritual, that is non-physical, heed paid to a being other

than Allah with a view to establish a spiritual relation with him, to draw his attention or to seek response from him, constitutes polytheism, and amounts to worshipping him. As the worship of a being other than Allah is neither allowed by reason nor by Islamic law, it puts such a worshipper outside the pale of Islam. Further, the nature of any rite, involving such a heed is not different from that of the rites performed by the idolaters in respect of their idols. The performance of such rites means to ascribe metaphysical power to the personage involved in them (for example an Imam or the Holy Prophet). The above is the view that is held by the Wahhabis and the semi-Wahhabis of our age.

In our times this view has gained considerable currency and in certain circles it is considered to be a sign of clear thinking.

But from the monotheistic point of view, it is as polytheistic as the theory of the Asha'irah. In fact it is the worst theory from the viewpoint of the unity of creatorship and the unity of Divine work.

While refuting the theory of the Asha'irah, we said earlier that they denied the causation system on the plea that a belief in the effectiveness and causation of the created things would amount to a belief in the existence of several sources and origins besides Allah. We pointed out that the things could originate sources only if they were self-existing and were independent of Allah. Asha'irah appear to have unconsciously believed in some sort of the independence of the created things. This belief is evidently polytheistic as it amounts to the denial of the unity of the Divine essence. Anyhow, they did not realize the consequences of their theory. They wanted to affirm the unity of creatorship, but unwittingly ended in supporting the plurality of the essence.

The same criticism is applicable to our own semi-Wahhabis. They also unwittingly accord a kind of self-independence to the created things, for they think that to believe in any supernatural factors is tantamount to believing in a power rival to Allah. These people overlook the fact that the supernatural deeds of a being whose entire existence depends on Allah and who has no independent status of his own, are in fact attributable to Allah before being attributed to him. He is nothing more than a medium through which Divine favour is conveyed. Is it polytheistic to believe that the angel Jibril is the medium of revelation and knowledge, Mikail is the medium of the means of living, Israfil is the medium of Resurrection and 'Izrail is the medium of carrying away the souls?

From monotheistic point of view, this theory leads to the worst kind of polytheism, for a belief in it amounts to a sort of the division of work between the Creator and the created. According to this theory the supernatural deeds fall within the exclusive domain of Allah and the natural deeds fall either within the exclusive domain of the created or are common to the domains of the Creator and the created. To believe in an exclusive domain of the created means a belief in the polytheistic idea of the plurality of work. Similarly to believe in a

common domain is another kind of polytheism.

Contrary to the current conception, Wahhabism is not only a doctrine opposed to Imamate, but it is also opposed to monotheism and humanity. It is anti-monotheistic because it believes in the division of work. As explained above Wahhabism is a sort of disguised polytheism. It is anti-human in the sense that it does not give any credit to human talent and ability which have made man superior even to the angels. As expressly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, man is the vicegerent of Allah and the angels were ordered to prostrate themselves before him. But Wahhabism still want to degrade man to the level of a wild animal.

Further, to make such a distinction between the living and the dead as to say that the dead are not alive even in another world and that the entire personality of man consists in his body, which turns into inorganic matter after his death, is a materialistic and ungodly idea. We will deal with this question later when we discuss about the Day of Judgement.

To make a distinction between the unknown mysterious effects and the known effects of the things and to regard the first as metaphysical in opposition to the second, is another kind of polytheism.

Now we can comprehend what the Holy Prophet meant when he said that infiltration of polytheism into belief is so quiet and imperceptible as the crawl of an ant on a smooth stone in the darkness of night.

The fact is that the dividing line between monotheism and polytheism is the relationship between Allah on the one hand and man and the world on the other. This relationship is that of "from Him" and "to Him". In the theoretical monotheism the line of demarcation is "from Him". "We all are from Allah".

So long as we recognize every truth and every existing thing to be having the quality of being from Him in its essence, its attributes and its work, we identify it correctly from the monotheistic point of view. It is immaterial whether it has one single effect or several effects or no effect at all, and whether it has or has not any supernatural effects. Allah is not the Lord of the metaphysical world alone. He is the Lord of the whole world. He is as close to the physical world as to the metaphysical. He is with everything and sustains everything. If a thing has any metaphysical aspect, that does mean that it has an aspect of Godship. As we said earlier, in accordance with Islamic conception of it, the world has the nature of being "from Him". The Holy Qur'an in a number of verses ascribes to the Prophets such miraculous acts as bringing the dead to life and restoring the sight of the born blind. Anyhow, it always adds the phrase: "With His will". This phrase indicates the nature of these acts and shows that they were from Him. Nobody should have the notion that the Prophets were self-dependent. A belief in any existence that is not "from Him" is polytheistic. Similarly a belief in the effectiveness of an existing thing, if that effectiveness is not "from Him" is again an act of

polytheism. It is immaterial whether its effect is supernatural like creating the earth and the heavens or is so trivial as overturning a leaf.

In the case of practical monotheism the line of demarcation between monotheism and polytheism is 'to Him'. 'We shall return to Him', as the Holy Quran says.

A heed, whether spiritual or otherwise, made to an existing thing with a view to proceed towards Allah and not as a goal in itself, is a heed to Allah. The existing things are to be regarded only as signs and milestones on the way towards Him, Who alone is the goal and destination.

The Prophets and the Imams have been described as 'the main routes and the straight path, the sign-posts for the people, the light houses in the land, the guides to the way of Allah, the preachers of His message and the proclaimers of what He likes'. (Ziyarat Jamiah)

Hence the question is not that to seek the intercession of the Imams, to invoke them or to expect them to perform supernatural deeds is polytheistic. The real question is something else. First we should be certain whether or not the Prophets and the Imams have actually gained such a proximity to Allah that they have been blessed with supernatural powers and qualities. The Holy Qur'an indicates that Allah has favoured some people with such a position.

Another question is whether the people who seek the intercession of the Imams and the saints, visit their tombs and make supplication to them, have or have not from monotheistic point of view a correct understanding of what they do. Do they have the idea of 'to Him', in their mind, when they go to the shrines? Or are they oblivious of Him and think that the Imam or the saint whose shrine they visit is himself the goal. There is no doubt that most of the people instinctively have Allah in their mind. Some people, may be totally devoid of the monotheistic view. They should be reminded of it. Anyhow, there is no reason why visiting the shrines should be declared polytheistic.

The third point is that it is a form of polytheism to glorify and praise any being other than Allah in a manner that is worthy of the absolutely perfect and self-existing being. Allah alone is far above every defect and deficiency. It is He alone to Him all praise is due. He alone is All-powerful. To ascribe such attributes by means of words or action to anyone other than Allah is polytheistic. We have already discussed earlier what actions constitute worship and adoration.

Fidelity and Earnestness.

The cognition of Allah automatically influences the entire personality, spirit, morals and the conduct of man. This influence is proportional to the degree of his faith. The stronger the faith of a man the more intense the influence of the cognition of Allah on him.

The effect of the cognition of Allah on man has many degrees and stages, and according to their variation human perfection and man's proximity to Allah varies. These degrees are called the degrees of fidelity and earnestness.

As stated earlier, when we turn to Allah and worship Him, we show that He alone deserves obedience and we absolutely submit ourselves to Him. This kind of worship and the expression of total submission is not permissible in respect of anyone except Allah. As for the question how far we are earnest in our total submission to Allah and non-submission to any other being, that depends on our faith. Evidently all are not alike from the viewpoint of fidelity and earnestness.

Some people make such a progress that inwardly and outwardly they are controlled only by the commandments of Allah. No personal desires can swerve them this side or that side, nor can any human being bring them under his absolute control. They allow their desires to operate only in accordance with the pleasure of Allah. Obviously to seek the pleasure of Allah is the only way to attain perfection. Such people obey their parents, their teachers etc. for the sake of Allah and only within the limits allowed by Him. Some go even a step further. Their sole love is Allah. They love His creatures for being His signs and mementos. A few go even further from this stage also. They do not see anything except Him and regard everything else as His manifestation. They find Him in every thing.

Imam Ali says: "I have never seen anything, but saw Allah before it or along with it".

If a worshipper tries to give a concrete shape in his life to what he communicates to his Allah in the course of his worship, he attains perfection and reaches the stage of fidelity.

For a worshipper his worship is a real contract by the conditions of which he has to abide in his life. This contract has two main conditions. The first is freedom from the obedience of every one and every thing else including his own desires, and the second is a complete submission to the commandments of Allah and their unqualified acceptance.

For a worshipper the correct way of worship is the basis of his education and spiritual development. It is a systematic instruction in liberal-mindedness, self-sacrifice, love of Allah, love of humanity, association with the right-thinking people, virtuousness and service to mankind.

It is clear from what we have said that Islamic monotheism does not accept any motive other than gaining the pleasure of Allah. The evolutionary reality of man and the world is "to Him". Anything which is not oriented to Him is false and opposed to the natural evolutionary course. From Islamic point of view whatever a man does, whether he does it for himself or for others, is for the sake of Allah. It is wrong to say that 'for the sake of Allah' is identical with

'for the sake of humanity' and that to do a thing for the sake of Allah minus humanity is nothing but mysticism and pedagogism.

From the viewpoint of Islam the only way is that of Allah and the only objective one should aim at is to please Him. Anyhow, the way of Allah passes through the people.

To do a thing for oneself is egoism, to do a thing for the people is idolatry, and to do a thing for Allah and the people both is polytheism and dualism.

The true monotheism is to serve oneself and others for the sake of Allah. According to Islam the monotheistic way is to begin things in the Name of Allah, not in the name of the people or jointly in the Name of Allah and the people both.

An interesting point may be derived from the Surah al-Ikhlas of the Holy Qur'an. The point is that there is a difference in being mukhlis, that is to do things purely for Allah, and being mukhlas, that is to be pure in oneself.

Unity and Singleness of the World

Does the entire universe that is the temporal and spatial creations of Allah really form one unit? Does the oneness of Allah, that is the unity of His essence, the unity of His attributes and the unity of His work, necessarily require that His creation also should have some sort of unity. If the universe is a well-knit and coherent unit, what is the nature of its coherence? Is it organic in the sense that the various parts of the universe stand in the same relation to the whole of it as the various limbs to a body, or is it mechanical and the various parts of the universe are like the various parts of a machine?

We have discussed the nature of the unity of the world in our book, Principles of Philosophy. In another book of ours, named Divine Justice we have stated that nature is an indivisible whole, the non-existence of a part of it being tantamount to the non-existence of the whole of it, and that the annihilation of the so-called evils will amount to the annihilation of the entire nature.

The modern philosophers, especially the great German philosopher Hegel has supported the view that the relation between nature and its different parts is that of a body and its limbs. Anyhow, the acceptance of the arguments he has put forward depends on the acceptance of all the principles of his philosophy. The supporters of dialectic materialism have followed him in holding this view. They defend it vehemently under the principles of reciprocal effect and interdependence of contradictories, and claim that in nature the relation between a part and the whole is organic, but when they put forward their arguments, they can prove only mechanical relationship. The fact is that on the basis of materialistic philosophy, it is not possible to prove that the world as a whole is like a body, and the relation of its parts to the

whole is that of the limbs to a body. Only the Divine philosophers who have from the time immemorial held that the world is the macro-man and man is the microcosm, have visualized this relationship correctly. Among the Muslim philosophers Ikhwanus Safa (the Brethren of Purity) have laid much stress on it. Even more than the philosophers the Muslim mystics look at the universe as one unit. According to their view the whole cosmo is one single manifestation of the Divine Reality.

The gnostics call all that is besides Allah "sacred overflow' and talking in similitudes say that it is like a cone, the pointed head of which having contact with Allah is simply imperceptible and the base of which is immensely extensive and outstretched.

At present we do not propose to deal with any of these statements of the philosophers and the Muslim gnostics, and again take up the point we were discussing earlier. As we said, the reality of the world is 'from Him' and 'to Him'. It is an established fact that the world is not merely a moving and a flux reality, but is in itself an embodiment of movement and fluxion. This is a fact which Islamic philosophy alone has been able to prove. In the course of the study of motion it has also been established that the unity of the beginning, the unity of the end and the unity of the course confers a sort of unity on the movements. Therefore, in view of the fact that the universe has one beginning, one end and one evolutionary course, it is obvious that it is a sort of one single unit.

Visible and Invisible

According to the Islamic conception of the cosmos, the world is an aggregate of the visible and the invisible things. This conception divides the universe into the world of the visible and that of the invisible. The Holy Qur'an itself has repeatedly mentioned the visible and the invisible, especially the invisible. To believe in the invisible is an article of faith in Islam. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Those who believe in the unseen." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2)

"With Him are the keys of all that is hidden. None but He knows them." (Surah al-An'am, 6:59)

There are two kinds of the invisible or the hidden: the relatively hidden and the absolutely hidden. The relatively hidden is that thing which a person cannot perceive by means of his senses because it is at a long distance from him. For example, for a person who is in Tehran, Tehran is visible and Isfahan is invisible. But for him who is in Isfahan, Isfahan is visible and Tehran is invisible.

In the Holy Qur'an at several places the word 'ghayb' (invisible or hidden) has been used in this very relative sense. The Holy Qur'an says: **"These hidden (unknown) events which We**

have revealed to you, were neither known to you nor to your people so far." (Surah Hud, 11: 49)

Evidently the events of the people of the past are 'hidden' as far as the present day people are concerned, though they were 'visible' for those who witnessed them.

At another place the same word 'ghayb' has been applied by the Holy Qur'an to the realities which are absolutely invisible. There is a difference between the realities which are perceptible through the external senses, but are not visible on account of great distance, and the realities which are imperceptible and invisible because they are not corporeal and finite. Evidently when the Holy Qur'an says that the faithful believe in what is invisible, it does not mean what is relatively invisible, for everybody, irrespective of his being faithful or infidel believes in that. Again when it says that with Allah alone are the keys of all that is hidden, it means all that is absolutely hidden, for the meaning of the verse does not fit in with what is relatively hidden. The same is the case with those verses in which the visible and the invisible have been mentioned together. For example, the Holy Qur'an says:

"He is the knower of the visible and the invisible; and He is the Beneficent, the Merciful." (Surah al-Hashr, 59:22)

This verse also refers to the absolutely invisible and not to the relatively invisible.

How are these two worlds, the visible and the invisible related to each other? Has the visible world any boundary line beyond which the invisible world is situated? For example, is it that from the earth to the sky there is the visible world and i beyond that there is the invisible world? Obviously such a conception is vulgar. Should we suppose that there is a physical boundary line which separates the two worlds, that would mean that both the worlds are physical and material. The relation between the visible and the invisible cannot be explained in material terms. At the most what we can say to make their relationship understandable is that they stand in almost the same relation as a main body and a branch of it or a body and its shadow. In other words this world is a reflection of another world. The Holy Qur'an indicates that whatever there is in this world is a 'lowered form' of the things existing in another world. What has been called 'keys' in the verse quoted above, has been named 'stores' in another verse. The Holy Qur'an says:

"There is not a thing but with Us are the stories thereof; but We do not send it down except in an appointed measure." (Surah al-Hijr, 15:21)

It is on this basis that the Holy Qur'an regards everything, even stones and iron, as having been sent down. **"We send down iron."** (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25)

This does not mean that all things including iron have been shifted from a higher place to a

lower place. In fact, whatever there is in the world, has its 'root' and its 'essence' in another world, the world of the invisible and whatever there is in that world, has its 'shadow' and a 'lowered form' of it in this world.

The Holy Qur'an makes it obligatory to have faith in the unseen. The same point is described in another way, when faith in the angels, the Prophethood and the revelation is enjoined.

The Holy Qur'an says: **"The Messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. They all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His Messengers."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:285)

"He who disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, certainly has gone far astray." (Surah an-Nisa, 4:136)

In these two verses the Books of Allah has been mentioned separately. Had they signified the Scriptures revealed to the Prophets, the mention of the Messengers would have been enough. That is an indication that here the books signify some different kind of realities. The Holy Qur'an itself has referred to some hidden truths and given them the name of 'an explicit book' 'a protected tablet', 'the mother book', 'a written book' and 'a hidden book'. A faith in this sort of metaphysical books is a part of Islamic creed.

The Prophets have come basically to enable mankind to have, as far as possible, a general view of the entire creational system. The creation is not limited to the perceptible and palpable things which come under the purview of the experimental sciences. The Prophets want to raise the outlook of man from what is perceptible to what is understandable, from what is visible to what is invisible and from what is finite to what is infinite.

Unfortunately, the wave of the materialistic and limited thinking which has risen from the West has spread to such an extent that a section of the people insists to bring down the vast and high Islamic conception of the world to the level of the perceptible and material things.

This World and the Next World

Another basic principle of the Islamic conception of the cosmos is the division of the world into the present and the next. What we said earlier concerning the visible and the invisible pertained to a world preceding this world - a world giving form to this world. Though from one angle the next world is the invisible world and the present world is visible, yet in view of the fact that the next world is subsequent to this world and it is a world to which man returns, it deserves to be dealt with separately. The invisible world is that from where we have come and the next world is that to which we shall go. That is what Imam Ali meant when he said:

"May Allah bless him who knows from where he has come, where he is and where he

will go".

Imam Ali did not say: May Allah bless him who knows from what he has come, in what he is and to what he will go. Had he said so, we would have taken that to mean that we have been created from dust, we will go into dust and we will be raised again from dust. In that case he would have referred to the following Qur'anic verse which says:

"From it (the earth) We created you, to it We will return you and from it We will bring you forth once again." (Surah Ta Ha, 20:55)

What Imam Ali has said here refers to some other verses of the Holy Qur'an and represents a higher conception. He meant "the world from where we have come, the world in which we are at present and the world to which we shall go".

From the viewpoint of the Islamic conception of the world, like the visible and the invisible, the present and the next world also have an absolute, not a relative sense. What is relative is the deeds which are performed. If something is done to satisfy one's own desire, it is a worldly act. In many cases if the same thing is done for the sake of Allah and to gain His pleasure, it becomes the next worldly act. We are going to discuss this world and the next in detail later under the heading 'Eternal Life'.

BACK Chapter 11 NEXT

Distinguishing Features of Islam

Islam is the name of the religion of Allah. That is the religion preached by all Prophets. The most perfect form of it was conveyed to people through the last Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah. (May peace and blessings of Allah be on him and his progeny). With him the Prophethood came to an end. The message given by him is now known by the name of Islam throughout the world.

The Islamic teachings conveyed through the last Prophet, being the everlasting guide and the most perfect form of the religion of Allah, have certain special features consistent with the period of finality. These features in their totality could not exist during previous ages, the period of the minority of people.

Each of these features is a means of knowing Islam, and represents one of its basic doctrines. These features help forming a picture of Islam, though it may be a bit vague. They are also a criterion by which it can be judged whether a particular teaching is or is not a part of Islam.

We do not say that it is possible for us to mention all these features, but we will try to present an overall picture of them.

We know that every ideology, or for that matter, every school of thought, which offers a programme for the salvation, perfection and prosperity of man, also puts forward certain values and prescribes certain do's and don'ts, should and shouldn'ts on the level of the individual or society. Every ideology says what should happen and what should be done, and determines the general policy and the aims to be pursued, for example it may lay down that everybody should be free and should live a free life. Everybody should be bold and brave and should make continuous progress in order to attain perfection. A society should be built on the basis of justice and fair play, making an advance towards proximity to Allah.

These 'do's' and 'don'ts' should naturally be based on some philosophy capable of explaining them. In other words it is but natural that the injunctions of an ideology should be based on a particular conception of the world, man and society according to which it may be said that such and such should be like this or like that, because the world or man or society is like this.

A conception of the world means the sum-total of the views and interpretations regarding the

world, man and society. In regard to the world it covers such views as: the world is like this or like that; it has such and such a law; it goes forward in such and such a way; its pursuer does not pursue such and such objective; it has or has not an origin; it has or has not a purpose. In regard to man the views which constitute the conception of the world are such as whether man has any innate nature; whether he is free or predestined; whether he is, in the words of the Holy Qur'an, a chosen being. As regards man the questions are: Whether society has a law independent of the laws governing the individuals; what laws govern society and history; and similar other questions.

As ideology is always based on a particular conception of the world which explains why the world, society or man is like this or like that, and determines what actions man should take and what sort of life he should lead. The answer of every 'why' of an ideology underlies the world conception on which it is based. Technically every ideology is a sort of 'practical wisdom', whereas every conception of the world is a sort of 'theoretical wisdom'. Naturally every practical wisdom is based on a particular theory. For example, the practical wisdom of Socrates is based on his particular outlook on the world, which forms his theoretical wisdom. Similar is the relation between the practical wisdom of Epicurus and others and their theoretical wisdom.

As various people have different conceptions of the world naturally their ideologies vary.

Now a question arises why there are so many conceptions of the world or so many cosmologies? Why should one school of thought look at the world in one way and another school in another way?

The answer to this question is not so simple. Some people have gone to the extent of asserting that it is the class position of an individual that determines his attitude and outlook and puts special glasses on his eyes through which he sees the world. According to this theory the methods of production and distribution create reactions that shape the mentality and the views of an individual in a certain fashion depending on how favourably or adversely he is affected by these methods. The views thus formed affect his judgement and his evaluation of the things. Mowlawi says:

"If you feel giddy, you will find the whole house whirling round; if you travel in a boat, you will find the shore moving along with you; if you are distressed on account of some bad event you will find the whole world boring; if you are happy, you will find everything pleasant. You being a part of the world, you see as if the whole world is like you".

According to this theory nobody can claim that his view alone is correct and the view of others is wrong, for the views are a relative matter only. They are the outcome of an individual's contact with his natural and social environment. Hence everybody's views may be presumed to be correct as far as he himself is concerned.

Anyhow, the matter is not so simple. There is no denying the fact that a man's thinking is greatly influenced by his environment. But it also cannot be denied that man is endowed with a faculty of independent thinking free from any influence. It is this faculty which has been termed by Islam as the innate nature of man. We may deal with this question in detail on some other occasion.

Even if we hold that man has no independent, in fact, realistic thinking, it is still too early at this stage of cosmology to blame him.

What the modern philosopher who have made a close study of this question admit that the root-cause of the variety of conceptions of the world should be looked for in what is called the theory of knowledge.

The philosophers have paid enough attention to this theory. Some of them have asserted that philosophy is not cosmology. It is only the methodology of the pursuit of knowledge. The reason why there are so many cosmological theories is that there are several methods of knowing the world. Some say that the world should be known through reason. Some others are of the opinion that the knowledge of the world can be acquired only through illumination and inspiration. So there is a difference of opinion about the method, the source and the criterion of attaining the knowledge of the world. According to some reason has a very limited role in this respect, but according to others its role is unlimited.

In short, the ideology of every school is based on its conception of the world, which in its turn is based on its theory of knowledge. How far an ideology is progressive depends on how far its conception of the world is progressive, which in its turn depends on how far its method of attaining knowledge is progressive. In fact the practical wisdom of every school depends on its theoretical wisdom, that is its way of thinking. Therefore it is necessary that every school must in the first instance make its way of thinking clear.

Islam is not a school of philosophy and has not talked in philosophical terms. It has its own terminology, which is intelligible to all classes in accordance with their particular level of understanding. It is astonishing that though it has referred to these questions only in between other subjects, its ideology in the form of practical thinking and its world conception in the form of a logical doctrine can easily be deduced from its teachings.

Evidently here we have to be contented with making a reference only to Islamic world conception, and cannot dwell at length on the valuable views expressed by Muslim scholars such as jurists, philosophers, mystics and other thinkers on the questions of Islamic Ideology, Islamic World Conception and the Methods of Acquiring Knowledge. Should we make such an attempt, the task is likely to be voluminous.

At the most we can produce a list, though incomplete, of the main features of Islamic views

on these questions. We may be able to complete the list on some other occasion.

A list of the main features of the views of Islam under their appropriate headings, viz. The - Methods of Knowing, Conception of the World and the Ideological Features of Islam is as under:

1. ***The Methods of Knowing***

(i) Is it possible to identify the truth? This is and has always been the first question in this respect. Many of the thinkers are of the opinion that it is impossible to identify the truth correctly. They maintain that it is the lot of man not to know exactly what really in this world is and what passes in it. They consider it impossible to gain an indisputably accurate knowledge conforming to reality.

However, the Holy Qur'an regards it possible to know the truth. It invites man to know Allah, the world, himself and history. In the story of Prophet Adam, which is really the story of man, it considers him to be fit to learn all the Divine names or the realities of the world. The Holy Qur'an says that in certain cases human knowledge can comprehend some items of Divine knowledge:

"They cannot comprehend anything out of what He knows save what He wills." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255)

(ii) What are the Sources of Knowledge?

From the viewpoint of Islam the sources of knowledge are: the natural signs or the signs existing in the world, man himself, history or the social events and episodes of the nations and the communities, reason or the self-evident principles, heart, in the sense of the illuminating and purifying organ and the written record left by the past people.

In many verses the Holy Qur'an has asked people to ponder over the nature of the heavens and the earth: ***"Behold what is in the heavens and the earth."*** (Surah Yunus, 10:101)

Similarly the Holy Qur'an has invited people to study the history of the past nations intelligently with a view to take lesson from it: ***"Have they not travelled in the land so that they may have hearts to understand and ears to hear!"*** (Surah al-Hajj, 22:46)

The Holy Qur'an believes in the reliability of reason as well as of self-evident truths. It bases its arguments on them and says: ***"Say: 'Had there been gods besides Allah, then surely both the heavens and the earth (i.e. the whole universe) would have been thrown into confusion'."*** (Surah al-Ambiya, 21:22)

"Allah has not chosen any son, nor is there any god along with Him. Otherwise each god would have surely championed which he has created and some of them would surely have overcome others. Glorified be Allah above all that they allege." (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:91)

Similarly the Holy Qur'an regards the heart as the centre of Divine inspirations and intuitions. Every man can receive inspiration in accordance with his sincere devotion and his effort to keep this centre spiritually pure and active. The revelation of the Prophets is the highest degree of this kind of knowledge. The Holy Quran has repeatedly referred to the value of the pen and the book and on several occasions taken an oath by them: ***"Nun. By the pen and that which they write therewith."*** (Surah al-Qalam, 68:1)

(iii) What are the means of Acquiring Knowledge?

The means of acquiring knowledge are the senses, faculty of thinking, argumentation, purification of soul and the study of the learned works of others. In Surah an-Nahl the Holy Qur'an says: ***"And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing, and gave you hearing, sight and hearts so that you might give thanks."*** (Surah an-Nahl, 16:78)

In this verse it has been expressly stated that contrary to the theory of Plato, man at his birth is devoid of every kind of knowledge. Allah has bestowed on him senses to study this world. He has given him conscience and the power of analysis so that he may subsequently go deep into the realities of things, and may discover the laws governing them.

According to his famous theory Plato believed that everything that existed had its corresponding form in the world of ideas. At the time of his birth man was already aware of all things, but was oblivious of them. He did not learn things anew in this world but only recollected them.

What has been mentioned in this verse is not contrary to the Qur'anic theory of innate knowledge. This theory does not imply that man at his birth actually knows all things. What the Holy Qur'an means is that the essence of man is in a state of growth and evolution, and that in his life he intuitively discovers certain fundamental and self-evident truths besides what he learns through his senses. The discovery of these truths is sufficiently convincing to force man to believe in them. That is what the Holy Qur'an means when it calls for *'tazakkur'* or recalling. Hence there is no contradiction between the Qur'anic verses calling for *tazakkur* and the above quoted verse of Surah an-Nahl.

In this verse hearing and sight, being the most important senses, have been mentioned as the instruments of knowing. Technically they are known as the means of superficial or primary knowledge, while heart or conscience which has also been mentioned in the verse, is technically described as the means of deep and logical knowledge.

Incidentally in this verse an allusion has been made to another important question also. It is the question of the stages of knowledge.

Apart from the sense and the faculty of thinking the Holy Qur'an equally recognizes piety and purity of soul as the means of acquiring knowledge. This point has been mentioned in many verses implicitly or explicitly: ***"Believers, if you fear Allah, He will give you power to distinguish between what is good and what is bad."*** (Surah al-Anfal, 8:29)

"By the soul and Him who perfected it and inspired it with the consciousness of what is wrong for it and what is right for it! He is indeed successful who purified it and he is indeed a failure who corrupted it." (Surah al-Shams, 91:7 - 9)

Learning and reading are some other means of acquiring knowledge which have been formally recognized by the teachings of Islam. In order to illustrate this point, it is enough to say that the first revelation to the Holy Prophet began with the word, 'Read'.

"Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from clot. Read, for your Lord is the most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen. He taught man what he did not know." (Surah al-'Alaq, 96:1 - 5)

(iv) Subjects of Knowledge

What are the things worth knowing and what is that which one should know? One should know Allah, the world, man, society and time. All of them are worth knowing and one should know all of them.

2. Conception of the World

This book being an introduction to the Islamic conception of the world is mainly concerned with this subject and it is the subject which you will find scattered throughout this book. Anyhow, to maintain continuity, we give a brief narration of the main features of the Islamic conception of the world:

(1) Nature of the world is 'from Him'. In other words the reality of the world is derived from His reality. A thing may come out of another thing, but its reality is not necessarily completely derived from that of the latter. For example take the case of a son and his parents. The son comes from his parents, but the reality of his existence is different from theirs and is something additional to their reality. In contrast the nature of the world is 'from Him'. Its entire reality is nothing more than its attribution to Allah. Its reality and its attribution to Allah are identical that is what is meant when we say that the world has been created by Allah. Had the creation of the world meant differently, it would have been procreation and not

creation. The Holy Quran says: ***"He does not beget nor was He begotten."*** (Surah al-Ikhlas, 112:3)

It makes no difference whether in terms of time the world has or has not a beginning. If it has a beginning, it is a limited reality "from Him". If it has no beginning, it is an unlimited reality "from Him". But in either case it is 'from Him', and its limitedness or unlimitedness makes no difference to its creational reality and its being 'from Him'.

(2) The reality of the world besides being "from Him" and hence transient by its nature, is not only changing and moving with the time, but is in itself a movement. As such it is continuously in the flux and is always in a state of being created and recreated. No moment passes without the world being created and annihilated.

(3) The realities of this world are a lower form of the realities existing in another world called the unseen world. Whatever exists here in a measured and limited form, is found in the transcendental or the unseen world in an unmeasured and unlimited form, or in the Qur'anic words, in the form of 'treasures': ***"There is nothing but we have treasures of it and We do not send it down except in a known measure."*** (Surah al-Hijr, 15:21)

(4) As the nature of this world is "from Him", it is also 'to Him'. This world has made a descending journey, but it is also in the state of making an ascending journey towards Him:

"We are Allah's and indeed to Him we are returning." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:156)

"The end of them all rests with your Lord." (Surah an-Nazi'at, 79:44)

"Remember that all things reach Allah at last." (Surah ash-Shura, 42:53)

(5) The world has a firm and regular system based on causation. Every existing thing is governed by a Divine destiny through this system.

(6) The system of causation is not confined to material causes and effects. As far as the material dimension of the world is concerned, its causative system is material, but as far as its spiritual dimension is concerned, its causative system is not material. There is no inconsistency between these two systems, each of them having its own place. The angels, the soul, the protected Tablet, the Pen and the revealed Books are the means by which Divine favour operates in the world by Allah's will.

(7) The whole world is governed by unfailing laws and norms they being a part and parcel of the system of causation prevailing in the world.

(8) The world is a guided reality. Its evolution is guided. All the particles of the world are

situated in such a way that they receive the light of guidance. Instinct, senses, reason, inspiration and revelation are all different stages of the general guidance of the world. Prophet Musa said: ***"Our Lord is He who gave to everything its nature and then guided it aright."*** (Surah Ta Ha, 20:50)

(9) In the world there is good as well as evil. There is consistency as well as inconsistency. There exist abundance and scarcity both. There is light as well as darkness. There are progress and development as well as stillness and stagnation. But the existence of what is good, consistent, abundant, bright and developing has the prime importance, whereas the existence of all that is evil, dark, inconsistent, and stagnant, is only subsidiary and secondary. Yet these subsidiary and secondary things play an important and basic role in the induction of what is good, consistent, harmonious and evolutionary.

(10) The world being a living unit and being administered by conscious forces (the angels managing the affairs of the world), is a world of action and of reaction as far as its relation with man is concerned. The world is not indifferent to a good man and a bad man. The rules of retribution, recompense and remuneration operate in this world as they do in the Hereafter. The faithful and the unfaithful are not treated equally. The Holy Qur'an says: ***"If you are thankful, I will give you more, but if you are ungrateful, then know that my punishment is terrible."*** (Surah Ibrahim, 14:7)

Imam Ali says: *"The ingratitude of someone should not deter you from doing good. Maybe that someone whom you have done no favour gives you thanks. You may receive more gratitude from the grateful than you miss in the case of the ungrateful. Allah likes those who do good"*. (Nahjul Balaghah -- See Saying 194)

What Imam Ali means is that the world being a living organism, harmonious and co-ordinated, it is not necessary that a person should get the reward of his virtue from whom he expects it. He may get it from some other unexpected quarter. The world has Allah who likes the virtuous.

(11) This world will be followed by another world. That world will be eternal where everybody will be recompensed in accordance with the deeds performed by him in this world.

(12) The soul of man is an eternal reality. Man shall not only be raised as a living being on the Day of Resurrection, but during the interval between this world and the Day of Resurrection also he enjoys a sort of life which is stronger and more perfect than this worldly life. Some 20 verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that while the body of man is in the state of decay following his death and prior to the Day of Resurrection, he is not totally devoid of some sort of life.

(13) The fundamental rules of life, that is the moral and human principles, are firm and

eternal. It is only the secondary rules and not the main principles that are relative and subject to a change. Humaneness cannot be one thing in one age and something totally different in another. It is not possible that during one period of time humaneness may mean to be an Abuzar and during another period it may mean to be a Mu'awiyah. There are certain eternal principles according to which an Abuzar will be an Abuzar and a Mu'awiyah will be a Mu'awiyah. The principles according to which Prophet Musa is Musa and Fir'awn is Fir'awn, are eternal.

(14) Truth is also eternal. If a scientific truth is absolutely correct, it is correct forever and if it is wrong, it is wrong forever. If it is partly correct, and partly wrong, it is always partly correct and partly incorrect. What undergoes a change is a reality, and that too a material reality. As for the truths, that is intellectual ideas and mental beliefs, they remain firm from the point of view of their applicability or non-applicability to a particular reality.

(15) The world, the earth and the sky are founded on the principles of truth and justice: ***"We have not created the earth, the heavens and what is between them except with truth."*** (Surah al-Ahqaf, 46:3)

(16) It is the established practice of Allah to bring final victory to truth against falsehood. The righteous and what is right are always victorious: ***"Our word has surely gone forth to our Prophets that they would be helped and that those who fight for Our cause would be victorious."*** (Surah as-Saffat, 37:173)

(17) All men have been created equal. No man by virtue of his creation can claim any privilege or right which another man does not possess. There are only three things which make a man superior to others:

The first is knowledge: ***"Are those who know equal with those who do not know?"*** (Surah az-Zumar, 39:9)

The second is fighting for the cause of Allah: ***"Allah has given those, who struggle with their lives and property, a rank higher than those who stay behind."*** (Surah al-Nisa, 4:95)

The third is piety: ***"Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is he whose conduct is best."*** (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:13)

(18) Man by nature has certain innate tendencies and inclinations. They include his religious and moral inclinations. The main foundation of man's conscience is his God-given innate nature and not his class position, gregarious proclivities or his struggle with nature. All these influences are acquired consciensiously only. Man by virtue of his human nature can have a unique culture and ideology. He can resist his natural environment, social atmosphere, historical factors and hereditary tendencies, and can rid himself of their influence.

(19) Every man is born as a human being, and as such even the most wicked man is capable of giving up his bad habits and reforming himself. That is why the Prophets have been entrusted with the task of advising and giving spiritual counsel to even the most wicked persons and their worst enemies in order to awaken their human conscience. If that method fails, only then they are allowed to fight against them. In his first meeting with Fir'awn, Prophet Musa was told to say to him: ***"Are you interested in reforming yourself. If so, I will guide you to your Lord, so that you may have a fear of Him."*** (Surah al-Nazi'at, 79:19)

(20) Man's personality is a compound in the real sense. At the same time it is one single element and that too in the true sense.

Unlike other organic and inorganic compounds, the component parts of which when combined together, lose their identity and independent nature and are merged in a harmonious whole, the contradictory elements of which man's personality is made up, do not lose their nature totally. This results in an inner struggle in which man is pulled to different directions. In the language of religion this struggle is known as the contradiction between reason and passion or the contradiction between the soul and the body.

(21) As man has an independent spiritual essence, from which his will originates, he is free to exercise his will. No kind of compulsion can deprive him of his freedom of choice. That is why he is accountable for himself and his society.

(22) Like human individuals, human society is also a real compound. It has its own laws, traditions and systems. Throughout history society as a whole has never followed the will of one single individual. A society is always composed of contradictory elements. The various intellectual, professional, political and economic groups forming it, never lose their identity completely. Clashes between these groups always continue in the form of political, economic, intellectual and doctrinal wars. Moreover, so long as man does not reach the zenith of humanity, a war will always be on between the developed men having the highest tendencies and the beastly men having the lowest tendencies.

(23) Allah does not change the destiny of any people unless and until they change themselves: ***"Allah does not change the condition of any people until they first change what is in their hearts."*** (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:11)

(24) Allah, the Almighty, who is the Creator of this world as well as of man, is independent of everything. He has no component parts. He is absolutely perfect. He shall always remain as He is. In His case any further development or evolution is impossible. His attributes are identical with His essence. The entire world is His work and a manifestation of His will. None can check or obstruct what He wills. Every other factor or will is perpendicular and not horizontal to His will.

(25) The world has a quasi-organic unity, because it has issued forth from one single source, is going back at a uniform pace towards it and is being managed and administered by conscious forces.

Ideological Aspect:

The Islamic ideology being very vast and having so many ramifications, it is hardly possible to describe all its features. Anyhow, acting in accordance with the maxim that something is better than nothing, we list hereunder what is conveniently possible:

(1) Comprehensiveness: As compared to other religions comprehensiveness is one of the distinguishing features of Islam. It would be more correct to say that comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness are the principal characteristics of Islam which is the most developed and perfect religion. With the help of the four sources of Islamic law, the Muslim scholars can find out Islamic point of view about every question. The Muslim scholars do not believe that there can be a situation about which Islam has no rule.

(2) Applicability of Ijtihad: The general rules of Islam have been so arranged that they are amenable to *ijtihad*. Ijtihad means the discovery and application of firm and fundamental principles to the particular and changing cases. Further, the task of *ijtihad* has been made easy by the fact that reason has been recognized as one of the sources of Islamic law.

(3) Liberality and Simplicity: In the words of the Holy Prophet Islamic law is liberal and simple. There is a hadith in al-Kafi, vol. V, according to which the Prophet said that Allah had not given him the instruction to escape from worldly involvement. He had sent him with an upright, easy and liberal law. Islam has not prescribed any hard and tedious duties. *"In the matter of religion Allah has not put on you any undue constraint"*. As the religious law is characterized by liberality, any rule found to be causing undue hardship, would be regarded as null and void.

(4) Useful and Healthy Life: Islam advocates a useful and healthy life and condemns extreme austerity and escape from life. That is why it has severely resented monkery and seclusion. *"There is no monkery in Islam"*.

In the ancient societies there existed either of the two tendencies; either monasticism and escape from worldly involvement or indulgence in this worldly life and escape from all that relates to the Hereafter. Islam has made the preparation for the Hereafter a part of this worldly life. The way to the next world passes through the life and the responsibilities of this world.

(5) Socialization: All Islamic teachings have a social character. Even such individualistic rules as prayers and fasting create collectivism. There are many social, political, economic, legal and penal rules of Islam which have this character. Similarly such precepts as *jihad* (the

Holy War), urging to do good and restraining from evil originate from the collective responsibility of the Muslims.

(6) Rights and Freedom of the Individual: Though Islam is a social religion, it attaches great importance to society and considers the individual to be responsible to society, it does not overlook the rights and freedom of the individual and does not belittle his economic, legal as well as social rights. From political point of view, an individual has the right of being consulted and elected, from economic point of view he has the right of owning the product of his effort and receiving the remuneration for his labour. He can sell, lend, donate, endow, cultivate and invest his legal property and can enter into a partnership in regard to it. From the legal point of view he has the right of instituting a legal case, establishing his claim and giving evidence. From social point of view he has the right of choosing a profession, choosing a residence and choosing a course of study etc. From family point of view he has the right of choosing his life-partner.

(7) Precedence of the Right of Society to the Right of Individual: Where there is a contradiction or conflict between a right of society and a right of individual, the right of social or the public right gets precedence to the private right or the right of an individual. Anyhow, this matter is to be decided by an Islamic court of law.

(8) Principle of Consultation: From Islamic point of view the principle of consultation is a recognized principle in social matters. In those cases where no Islamic injunction exists, the Muslims should decide their way of action through consultation and collective thinking.

(9) Elimination of Loss: The rules of Islamic law though general and absolute, are enforceable only to the extent that they cause no undue loss or damage. This rule is universal and constitutes a sort of the right of veto in respect of every rule of law.

(10) Importance of Usefulness: In the case of every act whether it is individual or collective, the first importance is given to its useful result. From Islamic point of view every action which is not useful is regarded as vain: ***"Successful indeed are those who shun all that is vain."*** (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:3)

(11) Importance of Lawful Transactions, Circulation of Wealth and Transfer of Money and Property: All such deals must be free from every kind of fraud and underhand dealing. Any transaction otherwise will be unfair: ***"And do not usurp one another's property by unjust means."*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:188)

Transfer of wealth by means of gambling is tantamount to swindling and is unlawful.

(12) Any profit on the capital lying idle, not in circulation for beneficial purposes, and not subject to loss and diminishing which takes the form of a debt or a security is usury and

unlawful.

(13) Every financial transaction must be conducted with the full knowledge and prior information of both the parties. Any transaction which involves a loss owing to lack of information is void. *"The Prophet has forbidden fraudulent transactions"*. This hadith originally relates to the fraudulent sale of defective items, but the principle of *ijtihad* has made the rule general.

(14) Contrariety to Reason: Islam respects reason and describes it as an inward prophet (guide). The principles of religion are not acceptable unless they conform to the results of rational research. In subsidiary matters relating to religion reason has been recognized as a source of *ijtihad*. Islam regards reason as a sort of purity and lack of it as a sort of ritual impurity. According to Islamic law insanity or intoxication invalidates minor ablution (Wuzu) just like urination or sleeping. Islam combats the use of every kind of intoxicant, because of its contrariety to reason. Reason is an integral part of religion.

(15) Contrariety to Will: Just as Islam respects reason, and in Islamic law there are certain provisions to protect it, Islam also respects will, which is the power which carries out the dictates of reason. That is why Islam considers all diverting activities which hinder the use of will-power to be prohibited and unlawful. In the language of Islam such diverting activities are called *"Lahw"*.

(16) Work: Islam is opposed to idleness and lethargy. As man receives much from society, he must do something for the benefit of society as well as for the benefit of himself. It is his duty to exert himself to do some useful work. An idle man's mind is the devil's workshop, as the proverb goes. Islam curses the man who is a parasite or a burden on society. *"Accursed is he who throws his burden on other people"*.

(17) Sanctity of Occupation and Profession: To have an occupation besides being a duty is something sacred and is liked by Allah. Occupation is semi-jihad.

"Allah likes a believer having a profession".

"A man who works hard for the sake of his family is like a person who fights for the cause of Allah". (Wasa'ilush Shiah)

(18) Prohibition of Exploitation: Islam resents and censures every form of slave labour and serfdom. It is enough for making a work unlawful, that it has the nature of utilizing the services of anyone else for one's own selfish and unfair ends.

(19) Extravagance and Wastage: People are allowed to exercise control of their property, but that does not mean more than that they have a freedom to use it within the frame-work

allowed by Islam. They are neither allowed to waste it in any way nor to expend it unnecessarily. It is unlawful to spend it on those luxuries and outrageous embellishments which have been described by Islam as squandering.

(20) Comforts in Life: To provide the family (wife and children) such things which make their life easy is not only allowed, but is also encouraged so long as that does not involve extravagance and does not lead to anything unlawful.

(21) Bribery: The giver and the taker of illegal gratification have been severely censured by Islam and described as deserving of Hell-fire. Any money received as a bribe is unlawful.

(22) Hoarding: Hoarding of foodstuffs and not bringing them to market, with a view to sell them when the prices go up, is prohibited. The Islamic Government is allowed to seize such a stock and put it on sale at a reasonable price even without the consent of the owner.

(23) Basis of earning is public interest and propriety and not the desire of people. Normally in financial matters importance is attached to the people's wants and inclinations, and for the legality of any profession, it is considered enough that it is in demand by the public. But Islam does not consider a mere demand to be enough for the soundness and desirability of any job or profession. It considers propriety and soundness as a necessary condition. In other words existence of a demand is not enough for the legality of any profession. On this basis Islam prohibits a number of professions and transactions. Such prohibited professions are of several kinds:

i. *Dealing in Things Which Give Currency to Ignorance and False Ideas:* Anything which encourages ignorance, perversion of thinking or distortion of belief is unlawful, even if there exists sufficient demand for it. On this basis selling of idols and crosses, adornment of women with a view to deceive their suitors, praising of anybody who does not deserve a praise and soothsaying and divining are prohibited. Any income derived through such means is unlawful.

ii. *Dealing in Misleading and Stupefying Articles:* The sale and purchase of all such books, films and other articles which in some way or other spread misguidance or corruption in society, is prohibited.

iii. *Any Action Which May be Helpful to Enemy:* To make money through any action which may strengthen the position of the enemy militarily, economically, morally or technologically and weakens the Islamic front is prohibited and is unlawful. Not only the sale of arms and other important equipment to the enemy is not allowed, but the sale of rare manuscripts is also prohibited.

iv. To make money through anything which may be harmful to the individual or society

such as the sale of intoxicants, gambling equipment, things which are basically unclean and the thingsthat are forged or adulterated is prohibited. Gambling, defamation of a believer, support of the wrong-doers and acceptance of a post offered by an unjust ruler also come under this category.

There is also another kind of unlawful earning. There are certain tasks for which remuneration must not be accepted. They are too holy to be paid for and hence they should not be turned into a means of earning. Such tasks are *'ifta'* (telling the rules of Islamic law), administering justice, giving religious education, delivering a sermon and the like. The profession of a physician also possibly comes under this category.

These jobs are too sacred to be made a source of securing income and collecting money. These duties should be performed without accepting any compensation. The Muslim treasury should ensure that the expenses of those who undertake these sacred jobs are met.

(24) Sanctity of Defending Rights: It is a sacred duty to safeguard the individual as well as the social rights and to fight against any transgressor: ***"Allah does not like abusing others, unless a man has been wronged."*** (Surah an-Nisa, 4:148)

The Holy Prophet has said: *"The best jihad is to say the just word before a despotic ruler"*.

Imam Ali has quoted the Holy Prophet as having said: *"No nation can occupy a commendable position unless it is able to secure the rights of the weak against the strong without any fear"*. (Nahjul Balaghah - See Letter 53)

(25) Continuous Struggle Against Corruption and Improving the Existing Conditions: The principle of enjoining good and restraining from evil is, in the words of Imam Muhammad Baqir, the basis of all Islamic injunctions. This principle keeps a Muslim in a state of seeking continuous reform and making incessant struggle against corruption and disorder: ***"You are the best nation that has been raised for mankind, for you exhort to what is good and restrain from evil."*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:110)

The Holy Prophet has said: *"You must exhort to do good and restrain from evil, otherwise Allah will put you under the control of the wicked. Then the good among you will be praying, but their prayer will be in vain"*. (Nahjul Balaghah)

(26) Monotheism: Islam is above all a monotheistic religion. It does not accept any doubt in regard to theoretical and practical monotheism. In Islam all ideas, behaviors and conducts begin with Allah and end with Him.

Islam severely rejects every kind of dualism, trinity, and polytheism and is opposed to every

idea that is contrary to monotheism such as the recognition of two independent, fundamental and exclusive principles of Allah and Satan, Allah and man or Allah and matter. Whatever is done, must begin and end with the name of Allah and must be done for His sake and to gain His pleasure. Anything which does not conform to this conception is un-Islamic. In Islam all paths lead to monotheism. Islamic morals spring from monotheism and end there. The same is the case with Islamic education, Islamic politics, Islamic economy and Islamic socialism.

In Islam every act begins with the name of Allah and with His help. *"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful". "All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the universe".* Everything takes place with the name of Allah and with His support. *"I put my trust in Allah and on Him should the believers rely".*

Islamic monotheism is not a mere idea and a dry belief, as Allah is not separate from His creatures. He is with all of them and encompasses them all. Everything begins with Him and ends with Him. The idea of monotheism encompasses the entire existence of a real monotheist. It controls all his ideas, faculties and behaviour, and gives them direction. That is why a true Muslim thinks of Allah in the beginning, in the middle and in the end of every act he performs. He never associates anything with Allah.

(27) Doing Away with Intermediaries: Though Islam acknowledges that Allah's blessings come to the world through certain intermediaries and believes that the system of causation operates both in material and spiritual affairs, it does not recognize any intermediary as far as the question of worship and adoration is concerned. As we know, all other revealed religions have been deformed and altered, and as a result the individual has forgotten the value of his direct contact with Allah. Now it is supposed that there exists a gap between man and Allah, and only the priests and divines can be in direct communication with Allah. Islam considers this idea to be polytheistic. The Holy Qur'an expressly says: ***"If My bondmen ask you about Me, tell them that I am close to them and respond to the prayer of those who pray."*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:186)

(28) Possibility of Coexistence With Those Who Believe in Only One Allah: From the point of view of Islam, the Muslims under certain conditions can live amicably in their country with such followers of other religions, as originally believed in monotheism, though now they have deviated from their original beliefs, such as the Jews, the Christians, the Magians etc. But the Muslims cannot live together in a Muslim country with the polytheists. Anyhow, in their own higher interest the Muslims can conclude with the polytheists, a peace treaty, a non-aggression pact or an agreement on any specific subject.

(29) Equality: Equality and non-discrimination are the principal articles of Islamic ideology. From the point of view of Islam all men are essentially equal. They have not been created in two or more than two strata. Blood, race or nationality is not the criterion of superiority. A Qurayshi sayyid and a negro are equal to each other. In Islam freedom, democracy, and

justice are the by-products of equality.

From the point of view of Islam an individual can be deprived of his civil rights in his own interest and in the interest of society. But that can be done under very specific condition and that too only for a limited period only. Anyhow this provision has nothing to do with any racial discrimination. From Islamic point of view temporary slavery is allowed only for reformatory and educational purposes. This question has no economic and exploitary significance.

(30) Rights, duties and punishments are bisexual in Islam. Man and woman both are human beings and as such they have many common characteristics. But as they belong to two different sexes, they have some traits which are peculiar to either of them only. Their rights, duties and punishments are common to both the sexes. In this respect there is no difference between a man and a woman. The right of acquiring knowledge, the right of worship, the right of choosing a spouse, the right of owning and disposing of property are all unisexual. But in some secondary cases where the question of sex has some special significance, the position of man and woman, though equal, is dissimilar and bisexual.

The Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah (Peace be on him and his progeny), with whom Prophethood came to an end, was born in 570 AD at Makkah. He was raised as a Prophet when he was 40 years of age. For 13 years He preached Islam in Makkah, where he underwent great many difficulties and hardships. During this period he trained a few selected persons. Thereafter he migrated to Madina where he established his centre. For ten years he openly propagated Islam there. He fought a number of successful battles against the arrogant Arabs whom he finally subdued. By the end of this period the entire Arabian Peninsula had embraced Islam. The Holy Qur'an was revealed on him piecemeal over a period of 23 years. The Muslims showed a wonderful devotedness and reverential attachment to the Holy Qur'an and the person of the Holy Prophet, who passed away in 11 A.H. in the 23rd year of his Prophetic mission when he was 63 years of age. He left behind a nascent society full of spiritual zeal, believing in a constructive ideology and conscious of its world responsibility.

There were two things which gave this new-born society a spirit of enthusiasm and unity. One was the Holy Qur'an which inspired the Muslims. It was always recited by them. The other was the lofty and penetrating personality of the Holy Prophet of which they were greatly enamoured. Now we briefly discuss the personality of the Holy Prophet:

His Childhood:

He was still in his mother's womb, when his father, returning from a business trip to Syria died in Madina. Thereafter Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather took over his custody.

From his very childhood the signs of the Holy Prophet's great future were evident from his features, his conduct and his demeanor. Abdul Muttalib intuitively detected that his grand son had an exceptionally bright future.

The Holy Prophet was only 8 years old when his grand father also passed away and according to the will of the old gentleman, the guardianship of the child passed to his elder uncle, Abu Talib, who was also surprised to see that the boy's behaviour differed from that of other children.

Unlike the children of the neighbours he was never covetous of food, and unlike the

prevailing custom of those days he always kept his hair combed and his face and body clean.

One day Abu Talib wanted him to change his dress in his presence before going to bed. Muhammad (Peace be on him and his progeny) did not like the idea. But as he could not flatly refuse to obey the order of his uncle, he asked him to turn his face away, so that he could take off his dress. Abu Talib was naturally surprised, as even the Arabs of mature age during those days were not averse to become totally naked in the presence of others. Abu Talib says: "I never heard him telling a lie, nor did I see him doing anything indecent. He never laughed unnecessarily, nor was he desirous of taking part in the games of the children. He preferred to be alone and was always modest".

Abhorrence of Idleness and Lethargy: He disliked idleness and laziness. He used to say: "Allah! I take refuge in You from laziness, lethargy, disability and worthlessness".

He always exhorted the Muslims to work hard and to be industrious, and used to say that adoration had seventy parts, the best of them is to earn one's livelihood lawfully.

Honesty: The Holy Prophet, prior to his being raised to Prophethood, made a journey to Syria on behalf of Khadija who subsequently became his wife. This journey, more than ever before made his honesty and efficiency clear. His honesty and reliability became so well known that he received the epithet of Muhammad, the trust-worthy. People entrusted their valuables to him for safe custody. Even after his being raised to Prophethood despite all their hostility to him, the Quraysh continued to deposit their valuables with him, for safe keeping. That is why at the time of his migration to Madina he left behind Imam Ali for a few days to return the deposits to their original owners.

Combat with Tyranny: During the pre-Islamic period a pact was concluded by the victims of cruelty and tyranny with a view to make common efforts for the protection of the oppressed against the unjust tyrants. This pact which is known as "Hilful Fuzul" was arranged in the house of Abdullah ibn Jad'in in Makkah by certain important personalities of the time. Later during the period of his Prophethood, the Holy Prophet often mentioned this pact and said that he was still willing to participate in a similar pact and not to violate its provisions.

Family Behaviour: He was kind to his family. To his wives he was never harsh. The Makkans were not generally familiar with such a good behaviour. He tolerated the stinging remarks of some of his wives, though they were resented by others. He emphatically counseled his followers to be kind to their wives for, as he often remarked, men and women both had good and bad traits. Man must not take into consideration only the unpleasant habits of his wife and divorce her for that reason. If he disliked some qualities of his wife, she must be possessing some other qualities which he liked. Thus the whole thing was balanced. The Holy Prophet was extremely affectionate to his children and grand-children and showed love and tenderness to them. He loved them, seated them on his lap, put them on his shoulders and

kissed them. All this was contrary to the custom and usage of the Arabs of those days.

The Holy Prophet showed love and affection to the children of the common Muslims also. He seated them on his lap and passed his hand on their heads. Mothers often brought their children to him for his blessing. Sometimes it so happened that some child urinated on his clothes. On such occasions mothers were upset and felt ashamed. Some of them tried to stop the child from making water. But the Holy Prophet asked them not to interrupt the child and said that he himself would clean his clothes, if they became dirty.

Treatment of Slaves: He was extraordinarily kind to the slaves. He told people that the slaves were their brothers. He said: "Give them of the same food of which you eat yourselves, and provide them with the same kind of clothes as you put on yourselves. Do not force them to do jobs which are too difficult for them. Share with them their jobs and help them in the performance of them. Do not call them slaves, for all men are the bondsmen of Allah, who is the real Master of everyone. Call your male slaves young man and your female slaves young woman." Islam gives to the slaves all possible facilities leading to their complete liberation. The Holy Prophet described the slave-trading as the worst occupation and said that those who traded in human beings were the worst people in the sight of Allah.

Cleanliness and Use of Perfume: The Holy Prophet was greatly interested in cleanliness and was fond of the use of perfume. He urged his friends and followers also to keep their body and house clean and perfumed. He especially exhorted them to have bath and use perfume on Fridays so that bad odor might not cause inconvenience to the congregation.

Social Behaviour: In his social life the Holy Prophet was always kind, cheerful and courteous to the people, took a lead in greeting all, including the children and the slaves. He did not stretch his feet in front of anyone and did not recline in the presence of others. In his company all sat in a circular form, and none had any distinct place or position. He was watchful of his companions and if he did not see anyone of them for two or three days, he inquired about him. If anyone of them was ill, he went to see him and if anyone had any trouble, he made every effort to solve his problem. In a gathering he did not address or pay attention to any one individual, but equally attended to all. He did not like that he should be sitting and others be serving him. He personally took part in all that was to be done. He used to say that Allah hates to see a man who considered himself to be superior to others.

Soft as well as Tough: In his personal matters the Holy Prophet was soft, sympathetic and tolerant. His tolerance on many historical occasions was one of the reasons of his success. But in the matters of principle where a question of public interest or of law was involved, he was tough and never showed any leniency. At the time of the conquest of Makkah and his victory over the Quraysh he overlooked all the wrongs which they had committed against him over a period of 23 years and declared general amnesty. He accepted the apology of the murderer of his well-beloved uncle, Hamzah. But on that very occasion he punished a woman of Banu

Makhzum, who had committed theft. This woman belonged to a very respectable family, who regarded the enforcement of a punishment against her as a great insult to them. They persistently requested the Holy Prophet to pardon her. Some prominent companions of the Holy Prophet also interceded on her behalf. But the Holy Prophet said angrily that the Divine law could not be suspended for the sake of any individual. In the evening on that day he delivered a speech and said:

"Former nations and communities declined and ceased to exist because they discriminated in the enforcement of the Divine law. If an influential person committed a crime, he was let off and no action was taken against him, but if an unimportant and weak person committed it, he was punished. I swear by Allah in whose hands my life is that I will be ruthless in the enforcement of justice even if the culprit be one of my own relatives".

Worship: He devoted a part of every night, sometimes half of it and sometimes one third or two thirds of it, to worship and adoration. Though his whole day was preoccupied, especially during his stay at Madina, he never curtailed the time of his worship. He found complete satisfaction in his worship and communication with his Lord. His worship was an expression of love and gratitude and was not motivated by a desire of securing paradise or by a fear of Hell. One day one of his wives asked him why after all he was so devoted to his worship? His reply was: "Should I not be thankful to my Lord?"

He fasted very often. In addition of fasting during the whole month of Ramazan and a part of the month of Sha'ban, he kept fast every other day. He always passed the last 10 days of the month of Ramazan in seclusion in the mosque, where he devoted his whole time to worship. Nevertheless, he told others that it was enough to observe fast for three days every month. He used to say that each one should carry out the acts of worship according to one's capacity and should not exert oneself more than one can bear, for such an exertion has an adverse effect. He was against monastic life, escape from worldly involvement and renunciation of family life. Some of his companions had expressed an intention to lead a monastic life, but he censured and reproved them. He used to say: "Your body, your wife, your children and your friends all have a claim on you and you must fulfil your obligations".

He prolonged his acts of worship while performing them singly, and sometimes was busy with his pre-dawn prayers for hours. But he tried to shorten his prayers while in congregation. In this respect he considered it essential to have a regard for the aged and weakest among his followers, and counseled others also to his follow his example.

Austerity and Simple Living: Simple living was one of the principles of his life. He took simple food; wore simple clothes and travelled in a simple manner. He slept mostly on a mat, set on bare ground and milked his goat with his own hands. He mounted saddle-less animals and did not like anybody to walk by his side while he was riding. His staple food mostly

comprised barley bread and dates. He mended his shoes and patched his clothes with his own hands. Though he led a simple life, he did not advocate the philosophy of asceticism, and believed that it was necessary to spend money for the good of society and other lawful purposes. He used to say: "What a nice thing wealth is, if obtained through legal means by a man who knows how to spend it".

He also said: "Wealth is a good aid to piety".

Resolution and Perseverance: He had a wonderful willpower which permeated among his companions also. The total period of his Prophethood was entirely a lesson in resolution and perseverance. In his lifetime several times the conditions so developed that no hope was apparently left, but he never allowed the idea of failure to enter his mind, nor was his conviction of his final success ever shaken for a moment.

Leadership, Administration and Consultation: Though his companions carried out every order of his without any hesitation and repeatedly said that they had an unflinching faith in him and were willing even to plunge themselves into a river or a fire if he ordered them to do so, he never adopted any dictatorial methods. In regard to the matters about which he had received no specific instructions from Allah, he consulted his companions and respected their views, and thus helped them develop their personality. On the occasion of the Battle of Badr he left the questions of taking military action against the enemy, choosing the camping ground, and as to how the prisoners of war should be dealt with, to the advice of his companions. On the occasion of Uhud he made consultation as to whether the Muslim troops should fight from within the city of Madina or should go out of the city. He consulted his companions on the occasion of the Battles of Ahzab and Tabuk also.

The kindness and tolerance of the Holy Prophet, his anxiety to seek the forgiveness of the sins of his community, his giving importance to his companions and his consultations with them were the main factors which contributed to the wonderful and great influence that he exercised over his companions.

The Holy Qur'an points out this fact when it says: **"It is by the mercy of Allah that you (the Prophet) were lenient to them, for if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they surely would have left your company. Therefore pardon them and implore Allah to forgive them. And hold consultations with them in regard to the conduct of affairs. Once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Allah likes those who put their trust in Him"** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159)

Regularity and Orderliness: All his actions were governed by regularity and orderliness. He worked according to a well drawn time-table, and urged others also to do likewise. His companions under his influence were fully disciplined. Even when he considered it necessary not to disclose certain decisions lest the enemy should get an inkling of them, his companions

carried out his orders without any argument. For example, once he said that they would move the next day. Next day all those who were ordered proceeded with him without knowing the final destination of which they came to know only in the last moments. Sometimes he ordered some people to move in certain direction, gave a letter to their commander and said that he should open it on reaching such and such point and act according to the instructions given in it. They acted accordingly. Before reaching that particular point they did not know what was their destination and for what purpose they were going. In this way he kept the enemy and his spies in the dark and often took them unawares.

Capacity to Listen to Criticism and Dislike of Flattery and Undue Compliments: Sometimes he had to face the criticism of his companions, but without being harsh to them, he explained his decision and gained their agreement and concurrence.

He absolutely disliked flattery and undue compliments. He used to say: "Throw dust on the face of the flatterers".

He liked solid work. He was in the habit of doing things correctly and firmly. When Sa'd ibn Mu'az died and was laid in his grave, the Holy Prophet with his own hands placed the bricks and stones in their right place on the grave and made them firm. He said: "I know that before long all this will be mined, but I like things to be done correctly and efficiently".

Fight Against Weak Points: He did not exploit the weak points and the ignorance of his people. On the other hand he tried to rectify their weaknesses and acquainted them with what they did not know. The day his 17 months old son expired, by chance the sun was eclipsed. People said that the solar eclipse was due to the calamity suffered by the Holy Prophet. He did not keep quiet in the face of this silly notion, but ascended the pulpit and said: "Men! the moon and the sun are the two signs of Allah. They are not eclipsed on account of the death of anybody".

Possession of the Necessary Qualities of Leadership: He had the maximum qualities of leadership such as the sense of knowing men, firmness, determination, boldness, having no fear of the possible consequences of a necessary action, foresight, capacity of bearing criticism, recognition of the ability of others, delegation of powers to others in accordance with their ability, flexibility in his personal matters, rigidity in regard to the matters of principle, giving importance to others, promotion of their intellectual, emotional and practical talents, refraining from despotism, not demanding blind obedience, modesty and humility, simplicity and contentment, dignity and elevation of manners and great interest in organizing human resources. He used to say: "If three persons of you travel together, choose one of you as your leader and commander".

At Madina he organized a special secretariat, and appointed a group of persons for performing specific job. There were scribes of revelation who wrote the Holy Quran. Some people were

entrusted with the job of drafting and writing special letters. Some recorded the deeds of legal transactions. Some others were made responsible to keep financial records. Still some others were responsible for drafting agreements and treaties. All these details are recorded in the books of history such as Tarikh by Ibn Wazih, al-Ya'qubi, at-Tanbih wal Ishraf by Mas'udi, Mu'jam al-Buldan by al-Bilazari and at-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd.

Method of Preaching: In preaching Islam his method was gentle and mild, not harsh and severe. He mostly relied on arousing hope and avoided threatening and frightening. To one of his companions, whom he sent for preaching Islam, he said: "Be pleasant and do not be harsh. Tell the people what may please them and do not make them disgusted".

He took active interest in the propagation of Islam. Once he went to Taif for this purpose. During the Hajj season he used to call upon various tribes and convey the message of Islam to them. Once he sent Imam Ali and on another occasion Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen for preaching. Before going to Madina himself he sent there Mus'ab bin Umayr to preach Islam. He sent a good number of his companions to Ethiopia. Besides escaping from the persecution of the Makkans, they propagated Islam there and paved the way for the acceptance of Islam by the Negus, the king of Ethiopia and 50% of the population of that country. In the sixth year of migration he wrote letters to the heads of a number of States in the various parts of the world and intimated them about his Prophethood. About hundred letters which he wrote to various personalities are still extant.

Encouragement of Knowledge: He encouraged his companions to acquire knowledge and literacy and with this end, he made it compulsory for their children to learn reading and writing. Further, he ordered some of his companions to learn the Syriac language. He often said: "It is obligatory on every Muslim to seek knowledge".

Some of his other sayings are: "Wherever you find a useful piece of knowledge, acquire it. It does not matter if you find it with a disbeliever or a hypocrite".

"Acquire knowledge even if you have to go to China for that purpose"

This emphasis on knowledge was the reason why the Muslims so speedily spread to all corners of the world in search of it and secured the scientific works wherever they found them. The Muslims not only translated these works, but took to research themselves also, and thus they became a connecting link between the ancient cultures of Greece, Rome, Iran, Egypt and India and the modern culture of Europe. In the course of time the Muslims themselves became the founders of one of the grandest civilizations and cultures in human history, known to the world as the Muslim civilization and culture.

The Holy Prophet's character and behaviour like his sayings and his religion were comprehensive and all-sided. History does not at all remember any personality who like him

ever attained perfection in all human dimensions. He was really a perfect man.

Chapter 21

Man and the Holy Qur'an

According to Islamic conception man has a wonderful story. The man of Islam is not merely a 'biped homo erectus', who speaks and has wide nails. From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, this being is too profound and too mysterious to be defined in such a simple way. The Holy Qur'an has at one and the same time lauded and disparaged him. It has praised him very highly, but it has also slighted him in the most disparaging terms. It has described him as superior to the heavens, the earth and the angels, but at the same time has also declared that he is inferior even to the Devil and the beasts. The Holy Qur'an is of the opinion that man is a being who has enough power to control the entire world and put the angels to his own service, but he often falls to the lowest ebb. It is man who takes decision about himself and determines his final destiny. We begin with the merits of man as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

Merits of Man

(i) Man is the vicegerent of Allah on the earth: The day Allah wanted to create man, He intimated the angels of His intention. **"They said: 'Will You put on the earth one who will make there mischief and will shed blood?. He said.- 'I know what you do not know."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30)

"It is He who has appointed You vicegerent on the earth and exalted some of you in rank above others, so that He may test you by means of what he has given you." (Surah al-An'am, 6:165)

(ii) Of the entire creation man has the highest capacity to acquire knowledge: **"He taught Adam all the names (all the realities of things). Then He presented those things to the angels and said- 'Tell Me the names of those if what you say is true'. They said: 'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except that which You have given us. (We can learn nothing, except that which You have taught us direct). Then Allah said to Adam: 'Tell them their names' ' and when he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not tell you that I. know the secrets of the heavens and the earth? (I know what you do not know at all). And I know what you disclose and what you hide'."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:31 - 33)

(iii) Man's nature is such that he intuitively knows that there is one Allah. Any disbelief or doubt is an abnormality and a deviation from real human nature.

"When the children of Adam were still in the loins of their fathers, Allah creatively made them testify His existence." (Surah al-A'raf, 7:172)

"So set your face resolutely for religion. That is the nature framed by Allah in which He has created all men." (Surah ar-Rum, 30:30)

(iv) Besides the material elements existing in the inorganic matter, plants and animals, there in the nature of man exists a Divine and angelic element also. Man is a mixture of what is natural and what is extra-natural, of what is material and what is not material, of body and soul: **"Who made all things good. And He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his seed from a draught of despised fluid. Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit."** (Surah as-Sajdah, 32:7 - 9)

(v) The creation of man is well-calculated and not accidental. Man is a chosen being: **"Then his Lord chose Adam, relented towards him and guided him."** (Surah Ta Ha 20:122)

Man has an independent and free personality. He is a trustee appointed by Allah and has a mission and a responsibility. He is required to rehabilitate the earth with his effort and initiative, and to choose between prosperity and misery:

"We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. On the other hand man assumed it. Surely he has proved a tyrant and a fool." (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:72)

"We created man from a drop of thickened fluid to test him. Therefore We made him hearing, knowing. Surely We have shown him the way to be either grateful or disbelieving. (He is free to go either the straight way that We have shown him, and prosper, or be ungrateful and deviate from it)." (Surah ad-Dahr, 76:2 - 3)

(vii) Man enjoys a dignity and a nobility. Allah has made him superior to many of His creations. Man feels his real self only when he realizes his dignity and nobility and regards himself above every kind of meanness, bondage and lewdness:

"Surely We have honoured the children of Adam. We have put the land and the sea under their control, given them sustenance and have exalted them above many of those whom We have created" (Surah Bani Israil, 17:70)

(viii) Man has been endowed with a sense of moral insight. He knows what is good and what is evil by means of a natural inspiration: **"By the soul of man and Him who perfected it and inspired it with the knowledge of vice and virtue."** (Surah ash-Shams, 91:7 - 8)

(ix) Man does not feel satisfied with anything except the remembrance of Allah. His desires have no end. He soon gets fed up with anything that he gets or achieves. It is only his attachment to Allah that can satisfy him: **"Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!"** (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:28)

"Man, you strive hard to get closer to your Lord, and so you will finally meet Him." (Surah al-Inshiqaq, 84:6)

(x) All the good things of the earth have been created for man. **"He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:29)

"He has made subservient to you (men) whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth." (Surah Jathiyah, 45:13)

Hence, man has a right to make a lawful use of all things.

(xi) Man has been created to worship his Lord alone and to take orders from Him. Hence it is his duty to obey the commands of Allah: **"I created the jinn and mankind only so that they might worship Me."** (Surah al-Zariyat, 51:56)

(xii) Man cannot find himself except by worshipping and remembering his Lord. If he forgets his Lord, he forgets himself, and does not know who he is, what for he is, what he should do and where he should go: **"Do not be like those who forgot Allah, and therefore He caused them to forget themselves."** (Surah Hashr, 59:19)

(xiii) When man leaves this world and the curtain of body which screens his soul, is removed, many realities which are hidden now, are disclosed to him: **"We have removed the veil from your eyes, and so your vision will now be sharp and strong."** (Surah Qaf, 50:22)

(xiv) Man does not exert himself for material gains only. To secure the material necessities of life is not his sole motive. He often moves and stirs up for the sake of higher objectives. It is possible that all his efforts be confined to seeking the pleasure of his Creator: **"0 well-contented soul! Return to your Lord well-pleased, well-pleasing."** (Surah al-Fajr, 89:27 - 28)

"Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, gardens underneath which rivers flow and in which they shall abide. (He has promised them) nice dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. What is more, Allah shall be pleased with them. That is the supreme triumph." (Surah Tawbah, 9:72)

Hence, from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an man is a being chosen by Allah to be His vicegerent on the earth. He is semi-angelic and semi-material being. He is instinctively

conscious of Allah. He is free, independent, holding a Divine trust, responsible for himself and the world. He controls nature, the earth and the heavens. He is inspired with good and evil. His existence begins with weakness and proceeds towards strength and perfection. Nothing can satisfy him except the remembrance of Allah. His intellectual and practical capacity is unlimited. He is endowed with inherent dignity and honour. Often his motives have no material aspect. He has been given the right to make a lawful use of the gifts of nature. But in all cases he is responsible to his Lord.

Demerits of Man

At the same time the Holy Qur'an has strongly reproached and censured man. It says that:

"He has proved a tyrant and a fool." (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:72)

"Surely he is very ungrateful." (Surah al-Hajj, 22:66)

"When he thinks that he is self-contented, he revolts." (Surah al-'Alaq, 96:7)

"Man is very hasty." (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:11)

"When misfortune befalls man, he prays to Us, reclining on his side, standing or sitting. But as soon as We have relived him of his suffering, he passes on as if he never invoked Us in connection with his affliction." (Surah Yunus, 10: 12)

"Man has always been very grudging." (Bani Israil, 17:100)

"Man is more contentious than anything else." (Surah al-Kahf, 18:54)

"Man has been created impatient - fretful, when evil befalls him, and when good befalls him grudging." (Surah al-Ma'arij, 70:19 - 20)

Is Man By Nature Good or Bad?

What conclusion can we draw from all this? Is man from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an good and bad simultaneously, and not only that but extremely good and extremely bad at the same time. Is man two-natured? Is one half of him light and the other half darkness? How is it that the Holy Qur'an on the one hand praises him so highly and on the other denounces him so badly?

The fact is that the Holy Qur'an does not praise and censure man because he is a two-natured being and one half of his nature is laudable and the other half is censurable. The Holy Qur'an

is of the view that potentially man has all the good points, but he has to actualize them.

It is he who is the builder of himself. The main conditions of man's actually attaining the good qualities which he potentially possesses is his 'faith'. Faith begets piety, meritorious deeds and effort for the cause of Allah. Through faith knowledge becomes a useful implement instead of being a tool of evil desires.

Therefore it is the real man, the vicegerent of Allah before whom the angels prostrate themselves. Everything is for him who possesses all human virtues, that is the man plus faith, not the man minus faith.

The man minus faith is defective. Such a man is greedy, bloodthirsty, miserly and stingy. He is a unbeliever and worse than a beast.

In the Holy Qur'an there are verses which make it amply clear what type of man is commended and what type of man is denounced. These verses show that a man lacking in faith and unattached to Allah is not a true man. The man who gets attached to the single Reality and gets satisfaction in believing in Him and remembering Him, he possesses all the superb qualities. But if a man is unattached to that Reality, that is Allah, he is like a tree which has been disconnected with its root. As an example we quote here two verses:

"By the time, surely man is in a state of loss, save those who believe, do good deeds, exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance." (Surah al-Asr)

"We have created for Hell many of the jinn and men. They have hearts, but do not understand with them; they have eyes, but do not see with them; and they have ears, but do not hear with them. They are like beasts or even further astray." (Surah al-A'rif, 7:179)

Multi-dimensional Being

From what has been said it may be derived that though man has many things in common with other living beings, yet he is quite different from them. Man is a material as well as a spiritual being. Each of the points which makes man entirely different from other living, beings, gives him a new dimension. The areas of difference are three:

(i) Area of the discovery of the self and the world.

(ii) Area of the tendencies which act upon human mind.

(iii) Area of the way how man is influenced by his natural tendencies and how he makes a

selection out of them.

As far as the discovery of the self and the world is concerned, an animal knows the world by means of its senses. This quality is shared by man with other animals. In this respect some animals have even a keener sense than man. But the information which is fed by the senses to animals or man is only superficial and external. Senses cannot go deep into the nature of things, nor into their logical relations.

Besides his senses man has another power which enables him to perceive and discover himself and the world. This mysterious power of understanding is not possessed by other living beings. Man with his power of understanding discovers the general laws of nature and by means of this knowledge he practically controls nature and makes it of service to him.

In the earlier discussions also we referred to this kind of knowledge which is peculiar to man and pointed out that the mechanism of intellectual understanding is one of the most complex mechanisms of the existence of man. If this mechanism works accurately, it opens a wonderful way to man's knowing himself. By means of it man can discover many realities which he cannot make contact through his senses. It is through this mysterious power which is peculiar to him that man can acquire the knowledge of the things which are beyond his sensual perception, especially the philosophical knowledge of Allah.

As far as the area of tendencies and urges is concerned, man like other animals is influenced by the natural and material urges and impulsions. His inclination to food, to sleep, to sexual affairs, to rest etc., pulls him towards matter and nature. But these are not the only urges which man has. He is attracted toward many other things which are not material, that is they have no size and weight and cannot be measured by any material yardstick. The spiritual tendencies and urges which have so far been identified and accepted are as follows:

(i) Knowledge and Information: Man does not want knowledge only to apply it to nature and to utilize it for improving the quality of his material life. In man there exists an instinct of inquisitiveness and finding out the truth. Man requires knowledge for its own sake and enjoys it. Besides being a means of living a better life and discharging the responsibility in a better way, knowledge as such is desirable. As far as man's life is concerned it makes no difference whether he knows or does not know the secrets of what exists beyond the galaxies, but he still prefers to know them. Man by virtue of his nature dislikes ignorance and is keen to acquire knowledge., Hence knowledge is an intellectual dimension of man's existence.

(ii) Moral Goodness: Man performs certain acts not with a view to get any benefit out of them or with a view to avert any loss or damage, but purely under the impact of certain sentiments called moral sentiments. He performs them because he believes that his humanness requires him to perform them. Suppose a man has been stranded in a desolate wilderness. He has no food and expects no relief. He is threatened by the danger of death

every moment. In the meanwhile another man appears. He helps him and saves him from death which seemed to be imminent. Thereafter these two men are separated and do not see each other. After many years the man who was one day in distress, sees his old saviour in a pitiable condition. He recollects that this very person saved his life one day. In such circumstances, will not the conscience of this man direct him to take some action? Will it not say that a favour must be matched with a reciprocal favour? Will it not tell him that he is under an obligation to show his gratitude to his benefactor? We think that the answer is in the affirmative.

If this man renders immediate help to that person, what will the conscience of other people say? If he remains indifferent and does not show slightest reaction, what will their conscience say?

There is no doubt that in the first case the conscience of other people will appreciate his action and will applaud him, and in the second case will blame and disparage him. It is moral conscience of man which says: **"The reward of goodness is nothing but goodness"** (Surah ar-Rahman, 55:60)

Hence, he who requites goodness with goodness should be acclaimed and he who remains indifferent to the acts of favour done to him should be blamed and criticized. Acts performed at the instance of moral conscience are called acts of moral goodness.

Moral goodness is the criterion by which many of human acts are judged. In other words, man does many things only because of their moral value without taking into consideration their material side. This is also one of the characteristics of man and one of his spiritual dimensions. Other living beings have no similar standard by which their actions may be judged. Moral goodness and moral value have no meaning for an animal.

(iii) Beauty: Another mental dimension of man is his interest in beauty and appreciation of the beautiful. His aesthetic sense plays an important role in all spheres of his life. Man wears clothes to protect himself against the heat of summer and the cold of winter. But he gives equal importance to the beauty of colour and stitching of his clothes. He builds a house for living in it. But he pays more attention to the beauty of the house than to anything else. He observes the aesthetic principles in the selection of his dining table and dining crockery and even in the arrangement of his food on the table. Man likes his features to be beautiful, his clothes to be beautiful, his name to be beautiful, his hand-writing to be beautiful, his city and its roads to be beautiful and all spectacles before his eyes to be beautiful. In short he wants a hallow of beauty to encircle his entire life.

For an animal the question of beauty does not arise. What is important to it is its food and not the beauty of that. It is not interested in a beautiful saddle, a beautiful scenery, a beautiful abode etc.

(iv) Adoration and Worship: The sense of adoration and worship is one of the oldest and the most stable manifestations of the human soul and one of the most important dimensions of the existence of man. The study of anthropology shows that wherever and whenever man has existed, adoration and worship have also existed. Only the form of worship and the deity to be worshipped have differed. The form of worship also has varied from dances and rhythmical group movements accompanied by some liturgy and recitations to the highest form of humbling oneself and the most progressive recitations. The deity has varied from pieces of wood and stone to the eternally self-existing Being free from all temporal and spatial restrictions.

Worship was not invented by the Prophets. They only taught the proper way of its performance. In addition they prevented and prohibited the worship of any being other than Allah, the One.

According to the indisputable religious teachings and the view expressed by some scholars of the history of religion like Max Mueller, the primitive man was a monotheist, worshipping one single true Deity. The worship of the idols, the moon, the stars or the men is a sort of later deviation. In other words it did not happen that man began with the worship of idols, the men or any other creatures and gradually with cultural development reached the stage of worshipping Allah, the One. The sense of worship which is often called religious sense generally exists among most individuals.

We earlier quoted Erich Fromme as saying that: "Man may worship living beings, trees, golden or stone-idols, the invisible God, a saint or a demon; he may worship his ancestors, his nation, his class, his party, or money and prosperity......... he may be conscious of his religious beliefs as distinguished from his non-religious beliefs or, on the contrary, he may think that he has no religion. It is not the question whether he has or has not a religion; the question is what religion he has?". . . . .

William James, as quoted by Dr Iqbal, says: "The impulse to pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that whilst the innermost of the empirical selves of a man is a self of the social sort, it yet can find its only adequate socious (its 'great companion') in an ideal world. . . . . . Most men, either continually or occasionally, carry a reference to it in their breasts. The humblest outcast on this earth can feel himself to be real and valid by means of this higher recognition". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 89)

Professor William James in regard to the universality of the presence of this sense among all individuals says: "It is probable that men differ a great deal in the degree in which they are haunted by this sense of an ideal spectator. It is much more essential part of the consciousness of some men than of others. Those who have the most of it are possibly the most religious men. But I am sure that even those who say that they are altogether without it, deceive themselves and really have it in some degree". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in

Islam)

The creation of the fictitious heroes out of the athletes, intellectuals or religious men is due to the human sense of sanctification which wants to have a laudable and adorable being and to extol him so lovingly as to make him supernatural.

Modern man's exaggerated praise of the national or party heroes and his adoration of his party, doctrine, ideology, flag, homeland and his readiness to make sacrifice for these is due to this very sense. The sense of adoration is an instinctive desire to worship the supermost perfectness and beauty free from every defect, deficiency or blemish. The worship of any created thing in any form is a sort of deviation of this sense from its normal course.

By means of worship man wants to soar from his limited existence and join a truth not subject to any defect, deficiency, annihilation or limitation. The great scientist of our times, Einstein says: "In this state the individual realizes the paltriness of his aims and ambitions and feels the greatness and awe produced on his mind by what is supernatural and metaphysical ... Prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is a normal and vital act by which the little island of our personality suddenly discovers its situation in a larger whole of life". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam)

Worship and adoration indicate a possibility, a desire of going out of the sphere of material things and an inclination to join a higher and wider horizon. Such a desire is peculiar to man. As such worship is another mental and spiritual dimension of man.

The variation from individual to individual in being affected by various urges and impulses and the choice he may exercise between them, are the questions which we propose to discuss next.

Diverse Powers of Man

Power or force need not be defined. The factor from which some effect is produced is called power or force. Every thing existing in the world is the source of one or more effects. Therefore everything whether it is inorganic matter or a plant or an animal or man, has some power or force, which if accompanied by consciousness, perception and desire is called ability.

One of the differences between the animals and man on the one hand, and the plants and the inorganic matter on the other is that unlike the inorganic matter and the plants, the animals and man can use a part of their power as motivated by their own desire, intention, inclination or some fear. A magnet has the property of attracting iron automatically as a result of some sort of natural compulsion. But the magnet is neither aware of its working nor does by its own inclination, desire or any fear demands that it should attract iron. The same is true of fire

which burns, of a plant which grows of a tree which blossoms and bears fruit. But the animal when it walks knows what it is doing. It walks because it wants to do so. It is under no compulsion to walk. That is why it is said that the animal walks of its own choice. In other words, some powers of an animal are subordinate to its choice, and work only when it wants.

The same is the case with a part of man's powers also. Some of his powers are subordinate to his choice. But there is one difference. The choice of an animal is controlled by its natural and instinctive inclinations. An animal has no power to resist the dictates of its instincts. As soon as it is internally attracted to a certain direction, it is automatically drawn to it. It can neither withstand its inner inclination, nor can it consider its pros and cons. It cannot think of any action to which it is not inclined presently but which is demanded by far-sightedness.

But that is not the case with man. He has the power to withstand his inner inclinations and impulsion and not to act according to them. Man has this power of discrimination because he possesses another power which is called will and which in turn works under the direction of reason or man's intellectual faculty. It is reason which forms an opinion and it is will that puts it into practice.

It is clear from what has been mentioned above that in regard to his various powers man is distinct from animals in two respects. Firstly, he possesses a number of inclinations and spiritual drives which enable him to extend the sphere of his activities to the higher horizon of spiritualities while other animals cannot step outside the limits of material affairs.

Secondly, he is equipped with the powers of reason and will; and as such can withstand his natural inclinations and can free himself from their compelling influence. He can rule over all his propensities and bring them under the control of his reason. He can fix a limit to each of his inclination, which is the most valuable kind of freedom.

This great power is peculiar to man and is not shared by any other animal. It is this power which has made man fit to be obligated to observe the precepts of religion, has given him the right of choice and has made him a really free, volitive and choosing being.

Inclinations and drives are a sort of bond between man and an external centre, which pulls him towards itself. The more he submits to his inclinations, the more he loses his self-control and enters a state of internal lethargy and misery. His destiny falls into the hand of an external force which may pull him to any direction. On the contrary the force of reason and will is an inner force and a manifestation of the real personality of man.

When a man procures the support of his reason and will, he gets together his own forces, breaks off with external influences, makes himself free and becomes an 'independent island' in the ocean of this world. By means of his reason and will man becomes master of himself, and his personality gains strength.

To gain control and mastery of one-self and to get rid of the influence of impulses and drives are the true objects of Islamic training which aims at spiritual freedom.

Self-Consciousness

Islam very keenly wants that man should know himself and should find out his position in the universe. The Holy Qur'an has laid all that stress on man so that he should know himself as he is, and should realize his position and status in the world with a view to occupy there a high position befitting him.

The Holy Qur'an is a book which teaches man how to build himself. It is not a book of theoretical philosophy concerned only with discussions and views. Whatever view it puts forward is meant for implementation and taking action.

The Holy Qur'an wants that man should discover himself. But this discovery of self does not mean that he should find out what his name is; what his father's name is; in which year he was born; which country he belongs to; with whom he has married or how many children he has.

This self is the same thing which has been given the name of 'Divine spirit'. To know this self means that man should be conscious of his dignity and nobility and should apprehend that his indulgence in any kind of meanness is far below his high position. He should realize his own sacredness so that the sacred, moral and social values may have a meaning for him.

When the Holy Qur'an says that man is a chosen being, it wants to make it clear that he is not an accidental being brought into existence by certain blind and deaf incidents like the accidental combination of atoms. The Holy Qur'an says that he is a chosen being, and for that reason has a mission and a responsibility. There is no doubt that in this terrestrial world man is the strongest and the most powerful being. If we compare the earth and all that exists on it to a manor, we can say that man is the lord of this manor. But let us see whether man has been chosen to be the lord or he has imposed himself on the world by means of some force or fraud.

Various schools of material philosophy assert that it is a mere accident that man has come to power. It is obvious that with this presumption the question of any mission and responsibility becomes meaningless.

From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an man has been selected to be the lord of the earth by virtue of his competence and fitness. He has not come to power by force or as the result of any struggle. He has been chosen by the highest competent authority, which is none other than Allah, the Almighty, and as such, like any other selected being he holds a mission and bears a responsibility. His mission being from Allah, his responsibility is also towards Him.

The belief that man is a chosen being and has been brought into existence with a purpose, produces one kind of psychological effects in the individuals, and the belief that he is the outcome of a number of aimless accidents produces another kind of psychological effects.

Self-consciousness means that man should realize his real position in the world. He should know that he is not merely a terrestrial being. He has a reflection of Divine spirit in him. Man should know that he is ahead of the angels in cognition. He is free, has the power of choosing and willing, and is responsible for himself and others. His responsibility includes to improve the world and make it thrive. The Holy Qur'an says: **"He has brought you forth from the earth and has made you husband it."** (Surah Hud, 11:61)

Man should know that he is a trustee appointed by Allah and that he has not gained superiority by chance. Hence it does not befit him to despotically acquire every thing for himself and think that he has no responsibility or duty.

Promotion of Talents

Islamic teachings show that the sacred school of Islam has paid equal attention to all dimensions of man, whether they are physical, spiritual, material, moral, intellectual or emotional. It has paid deep attention to all these dimensions, whether they are individual or collective, and has not overlooked any aspect of them. It has paid special attention to the promotion and development of all of them in accordance with certain well-laid down principles. Here we give a brief account of them one by one:

Development of Body

Islam is severely opposed to paying too much attention to body in the sense of indulgence in licentiousness and lewdness. But it considers it to be a duty of man to keep his body healthy and sound and regards every action that is injurious to body as unlawful. If on any occasion an obligatory act (such as fasting) is judged to be injurious to health, it not only loses its imperativeness, but may be prohibited. Every unhealthy practice is unlawful in the eyes of Islam, and many rules of conduct have been prescribed for the sake of ensuring physical health from hygienic point of view.

Some people may not differentiate between looking after the body, which is a question of health, and indulgence in bodily pleasure, which is a moral question. They may think that as Islam is against bodily indulgence, it is also against looking after physical health. They may even hold that the actions injurious to health are moral actions from the viewpoint of Islam. This kind of thinking is generally wrong and dangerous. There is a vast difference between looking after health and sensual enjoyment.

Islam is against licentiousness and leading a sensual life. Sensual enjoyment hampers spiritual

development. It is not only harmful to spiritual health, but is also injurious to the healthy development of body. It may ruin physical health, for it leads to excess which basically disturbs all bodily systems.

Development of Soul

Islam has paid great attention to the development of mental faculties and acquisition of independent thinking. It combats all that is opposed to the independence of reason, such as the blind imitation of the ancestors or some prominent people and following the majority heedlessly and without examination. The promotion of will-power, acquisition of self-control and freedom from the absolute control of impulses is the basis of many

articles of Islamic worship and other Islamic teachings. Islam pays particular attention to the promotion of the sense of seeking truth, acquisition of knowledge and the development of aesthetic sense and a taste for worship.

Man's Effective Role in Building His Future

There are two kinds of things existing in the world: organic and inorganic. The inorganic things such as water, fire, stone and dust are lifeless and have no role in forming or perfecting themselves. They are formed purely under the impact of external factors and occasionally acquire perfection under the impact of the same factors. We do not find these things making any effort to build or develop themselves.

On the contrary we see that the living things like plants, animals and men make continuous efforts to protect themselves against any injury or mishap. They assimilate some other matter and to procreate the like. The plants have a number of natural faculties effective in the making of their future. They have power by means of which they absorb and assimilate matter from the earth or the air. They further have power which help them from within to grow and develop. Similarly they have power which makes it possible for them to procreate.

In the animals all these natural powers exist in addition to a number of other conscious powers such as the senses of sight, learning and touch and the urges, impulses and inclinations mentioned earlier. An animal by means of these powers and faculties, on the one hand protects itself against any mishap and on the other takes the necessary measures to ensure its individual growth and the survival of its species.

In man there exist all the natural and conscious powers and faculties which exist in animals and plants. In addition, he has a number of additional impulses and drives as explained earlier. Further, he is equipped with reason and will which put his destiny to a great extent in his own hand and enable him to determine his future himself.

It is clear from what has been said that a certain part of the existing things, namely the inorganic matter, has no role in making its future.

There are some other things which have a role in making their future, but their role is neither conscious nor free. Nature directs their inner powers in such a way that they unconsciously protect themselves and make their future. This is the case with the plants.

Still some other things have a greater role. Their role is conscious, though not free. They endeavour to ensure their survival with a sort of self-consciousness and some knowledge of their environment. That is the case with the animals.

But man has a more active, more effective and more extensive role in making his future. His role is conscious as well as free. He is conscious of himself as well as of his environment. By means of his will and power of reasoning he can choose his future as he likes. Incidentally man's role is far more extensive and vaster than that of an animal. The extensiveness of the sphere of man's role in regard to his future originates from three characteristics peculiar to him:

(i) Extensiveness of the range of his information: Man by means of his knowledge extends the range of his information from the superficialities to the depth of nature. He knows the laws of nature and by using them can mould nature to be in a harmony with the requirements of his life.

(ii) Extensiveness of the range of his desires: We have mentioned this characteristic of man earlier under the following two headings: Man and Animal, and man as a multidimensional being.

(iii) Man has a special self-making ability: No other being can be compared to him in this respect. Though in certain other living organisms also like plants and animals certain changes can be brought about by means of special training factors, none of them can make these changes independently. It is man who introduces required changes in them. Moreover, as compared to man, their changeability is very limited.

In regard to his qualities and habits man is only a potential being, that is he is born devoid of any qualities and faculties. In contrast, each animal is born with a number of its special qualities. As man lacks any sort of quality and habit and at the same time he is capable of acquiring a lot of them. Acquiring them gradually he secures for himself a number of 'secondary dimensions' in addition to his inborn dimensions.

Man is the only being to whom the law of creation has provided with a painting brush to paint his features as he likes. Contrary to the formation of his physical organs, which is completed while he is still in his mother's womb, the formation of his psychological organs known as his

qualities, habits and moral character, is mostly completed after he has been born.

That is the reason why every being, including the animals, is only what it has been made. Only man can be whatever he wants to be. It is also for this reason that all the individual animals belonging to one species have the same psychological characteristics and qualities in the same way as they have the same physical limbs and organs. All cats have one set of habits; all dogs another; and all ants still another. If there is any difference between the individuals, that is insignificant. But the difference in the habits and moral character between individual human beings has no limit. As such man is the only being which himself can choose what he should be.

The Islamic traditions say that on the Day of Resurrection men will be raised in a form appropriate to their acquired spiritual qualities and not in the physical form of their body. In other words men will be raised in the shape of the animals nearest to them from the viewpoint of their acquired moral qualities. Only those individuals will be raised in the human shape whose moral qualities and secondary spiritual dimensions conform with the dignity and eminence of human beings; in other words, whose morals and manners are human.

By dint of his knowledge man subdues nature and employs it to meet his own needs. Having the power of self-making he makes himself as he likes and thus becomes the master of his future destiny.

All educational institutions, moral schools and religious teachings are meant to guide man as to how he should make his future. Straight path is the way that leads man to future prosperity, and devious way is that which leads him to future ruin and misery. In the Holy Qur'an Allah says: **"We showed man (who is the free agent) the way so that he may choose, of his own accord either the way We showed him and be grateful or go the other way, that is the way of ingratitude and disbelief."** (Surah ad-Dahr, 76:3)

From the foregoing discussion we have come to know that out of knowledge and faith each of them has a separate role in making the future of man. The role of knowledge is to show the way of making his future. Knowledge enables him to make his future as he likes. Faith tells him how to make it in such a way that it may be beneficial to himself and society. Faith prevents man from making his future on a material and individualistic basis. It gives direction to his desires and makes them embrace spiritualities instead of being confined to what is materialistic.

Knowledge serves as a tool for the achievement of man's desires. It help him turn nature as he wants. But knowledge is not concerned how nature is moulded and whether one uses it for the benefit of society or for advancing the interests of some particular individuals only that depends on what kind of men are those at whose disposal knowledge is. But faith works as a checking power. It controls man's impulses and directs them to the course of truth and

morality. Faith makes man, and man builds the world with the power of his knowledge. Where faith and knowledge are combined, both man and the world are brought to the desired state.

Man's Will and Range of His Freedom

Though man has enough freedom to be able to develop his psychological organs, to bring his natural environment to the desired state and to make his future, obviously he has many limitations and his freedom is only relative. In other words the range of his freedom is limited and only within that range he can choose his good or bad future.

There are several aspects of man's limitations:

(i) Heredity: Man comes to this world with human nature. His parents being human being, he also has to be willy-nilly a human being. From his parents he inherits a number of hereditary traits like the colour of his skin and eyes and some other features of his body which often continue to be transmitted for several generations. Man cannot choose them for himself. They are forcibly transmitted to him by inheritance.

(ii) Natural and Geographical Environment: Man's natural and geographical environment and the region in which he is brought up, invariably produce a number of effects on his body and spirit. Each of the hot, cold and temperate regions has certain inevitable effects on the spirit and morals of the inhabitants of that region. The same is true of the mountainous and the desert areas also.

(iii) Social Atmosphere: Social atmosphere of man is an important factor in the formation of his spiritual and moral characteristics. Language, social etiquette, customs and religion are the things which are mostly imposed on man by social atmosphere.

(iv) History and Time Factors: From the viewpoint of social environment man is influenced not only by the present time, but the past events also play a considerable role in moulding his character. On the whole, there is a definite link between the present and the past of every existing being. The past and the future of a being are not like two points totally separate from each other, but are like two pieces of a continuous process. The past is the seed and the nucleus of the future.

Man's Revolt Against Limitations

Though man cannot totally sever his relation with his heredity, natural environment, social atmosphere and the factors of history and time, yet he can revolt against the limitations imposed by them and to a great extent can free himself from the way of these factors. Man by dint of his knowledge and intellect on the one hand, and his will and faith on the other, can

bring about changes in these factors as he wishes, and can become the master of his destiny.

Man and Divine Fate

Generally it is believed that Divine fate is the main factor that imposes limitation on man, but we did not mention it while recounting the factors that limit man's freedom. Why?

Does Divine fate not exist, or is it not a limiting factor? There is no doubt about the existence of Divine fate, but it imposes no restriction on man. Divine fate has two parts known as 'qaza' and 'qadar'. Divine qaza means a Divine decree in respect of the

occurrences and events, and Divine qadar means estimation of the phenomena and the events. From the viewpoint of divinity it is indisputable that Divine fate does not apply to any event direct. It necessitates its occurrence only through its causes. Divine qaza requires that the world order should be based on the system of causation. Whatsoever freedom man may have on account of his intellect and will and whatsoever limitations he may have because of the hereditary, environmental and historical factors, he has been made by decree of Allah subject to a definite system of causes and effects in the world.

Therefore Divine qaza is not considered to be a factor imposing any restriction on man. Whatever restrictions it imposes are the result of man's heredity, environmental and historical conditions and nothing else. Similarly whatever freedom he has, that also has been decreed by Allah. He has decreed that man should have intellect and will, and within a limited sphere of his natural and social conditions, should to a large extent, be independent of these conditions, and thus be able to take his destiny and future in his own hands.

Man and Obligations

One of the principal characteristics of man is that he has the capability of being obligated to observe religious precepts. He alone can live within the framework of the laws enunciated for him. No other being can follow a law other than the natural compulsory laws. For example, it is not possible to lay down law for the stones and timber or for the trees and flowers or for the horses, the cows and the sheep. They cannot be obligated to abide by any laws framed for them and in their interest. If any action is required to safeguard their interests, that action has to be imposed on them.

Man is the only being which has the distinction of being able to conduct himself within the framework of a series of contractual laws. As these laws are framed by a competent authority and then imposed on man, they naturally involves a sort of hardship for him. That is why they have been given the name of 'obligation'.

In order to bind man to carry out a certain obligation, the law-giver has to observe certain

conditions. In other words only a man fulfilling certain conditions shoulders the responsibility of carrying out the obligations. The conditions which must be fulfilled in case of every obligation, are as under:

(i) Puberty: When man reaches a certain stage of his life there appear some sudden changes in his body, his feelings and his thoughts. The appearance of these changes is called puberty. It is a natural stage attained by everyone.

It is not possible to determine an exact time when one attains puberty. Some individuals reach this stage earlier than others. That largely depends on the personal characteristics of the individuals as well as their regional and environmental conditions.

What is certain is that women reach the stage of natural puberty earlier than men. From legal point of view it is necessary to fix a definite age of majority in order to achieve uniformity. It may be either the average age of puberty or the minimum age of it (in addition to another condition of maturity which is understanding as described in Islamic jurisprudence).

On this basis an individual may reach the age of natural puberty, but may not be considered to have attained legal majority. In accordance with the view held by the majority of the Shi'ah Ulema the legal majority of man from the point of view of age has been fixed at his completing 15 years and entering the 16th year and that of a woman at her completing nine years and entering the 10th year. Legal majority is one of the conditions of the legal capacity for the implementation of obligations. In other words, a person who has not reached this stage, the law is not addressed to him, unless it is proved that he has attained natural puberty before reaching the age of legal majority.

(ii) Sanity: Another condition of the liability for the discharge of obligations is sanity. A lunatic lacking the power of understanding has no obligations, his case being similar to that of a minor during the period of his minority. Even on attaining majority a person is not obligated to perform acts which he missed when he was a minor. For example an adult is not obligated to complete the prayers which he did not offer during his infancy, for at that time the law was not addressed to him. A lunatic during his lunacy is also not obligated. Hence if he later regains his senses, he will not be obligated to perform the prayers and the fasts which he missed during the period of his lunacy. He will be obligated only to carry them out subsequent to his recovery. Same is the case of the religious taxes like, Zakat and Khums, which may become due on the property of a minor or a lunatic. A minor or a lunatic is liable to pay them only after reaching the stage of being obligated, if not already paid by his legal guardian.

(iii) Knowledge and Awareness: Obviously a man can discharge an obligation only if he is aware of its existence. In other words, a man must have been informed of his obligation before he is expected to discharge it.

Suppose the law-giver lays down a law but he does not convey it to the person who has to act according to it. In this case that person will not be obliged, or rather will not be able to put that law into effect. If he violates that law, the law-giver cannot justifiably punish him. To punish a person who is not aware of his obligation and his ignorance of law is not due to any fault of his, is bad and such a punishment is unsound. This case is known as 'abominableness of punishment without exposition of law'.

The Holy Qur'an has repeatedly mentioned this truth and has stated that no people are to be punished for the violation of law unless they have been duly warned and the provisions of law have been conveyed to them.

Of course the condition of the awareness of law as a prerequisite of its application does not imply that anybody can keep himself intentionally ignorant of the law and then can put forward his ignorance as an excuse. It is the bounden duty of every man fit for the application of law to acquire knowledge of it and act accordingly. A hadith says that on the Day of Judgement some sinners will be produced in the Divine Court of Justice and will be questioned about their failure to discharge some of their responsibilities. They will be asked why they did not do their duty. They will say: "We did not know". It will be said to them: "Why did you not know and why did you not try to become aware of the law?"

Hence when we say that awareness is a condition of the applicability of a law, we mean that if an obligation has not been conveyed to the person to whom it is applicable and he could not become aware of it in spite of his making due effort to acquire necessary knowledge, such a person is excusable in the sight of Allah.

(iv) Ability and Power: A man can be obligated to do only what he can perform. An act which he cannot perform, can never become his obligation. There is no doubt that man's ability is limited. Hence obligations should be imposed on him only within that limit. For example, man has the capacity of acquiring knowledge, but the scope of his acquiring it, is limited from the viewpoint of time and the amount of information. Howsoever an individual may be a genius, he must cross the different stages of knowledge gradually and over a length of time. To force a man to complete within a short period an academic course, which normally takes several years, means to force him to do a task which is beyond his power and capacity. Similarly to force a man to undertake the study of all the sciences of the world means asking him to do something totally impossible. Such an obligation will never be imposed by a just and judicious source. In the Holy Qur'an Allah says: **"Allah does not take a soul beyond its scope."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:286)

In other words Allah does not impose an obligation on anyone beyond his capacity. If somebody is drowning and we can rescue him, it is incumbent on us to do so. But if, for example, an aircraft is crashing and we are absolutely unable to do anything to save it, we have no obligation in this respect. Allah will not punish us for not preventing the crash.

Here there is a point to be noted. The fact that obligation is conditional on awareness, does not mean that it is not our duty to gain knowledge, similarly the fact that obligation is conditional on ability does not imply that we are not required to gain the necessary power and ability. In certain cases it is indeed incumbent upon us to gain such power. Suppose we are confronted with a mighty and powerful enemy who wants to encroach on our rights or intends to commit an aggression against the territory of Islam. In this case if we know that we are unable to fight him and to a make any such attempt simply means the loss of our forces without there being any present or future prospect of achieving a result, obviously we are not obliged to take action and resist the aggressor. But it has always been and still is our duty to acquire enough power so that in similar circumstances we may not be helpless spectators. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Make ready for them all you can of force and of horses tethered so that thereby you may dismay the enemy of Allah and your enemy."** (Surah al-Anfal, 8:60)

Just as an individual or a society that neglects to acquire enough knowledge is liable to be Divinely blamed and his or its ignorance is not to be accepted as an excuse, similarly a weak individual or a weak society that has neglected to gain enough power is to be Divinely blamed and punished. Weakness cannot be an excuse.

(v) Power of Choice and free-Will: Another pre-requisite condition of an obligation is free-will. In other words, man is obligated to perform a duty only when no coercion or compulsion by force of circumstances is involved in the act. No act can be obligatory if coercion or compulsion by force of circumstances is involved in it. The following examples illustrate the cases of coercion: If a person is forced by someone not to keep a fast and is threatened that his life will be in danger if he ignores the threat, obviously fasting will not be obligatory for him. The same will be the position of a man who has the means to go on pilgrimage, but is threatened by a tyrant with dire consequences to himself or his dependents if he goes. The Holy Prophet has declared: "There is no obligation if there is any coercion.".

In the case of force of circumstances the individual concerned is not threatened by any other being. He himself takes the decision. But his choice is the result of harsh circumstances which he faces. For example, a man is left helpless and hungry in a desert. Except carrion he has no food to allay his hunger and keep himself alive. In these circumstances the rule about the prohibition of carrion is naturally waved. The difference between coercion and compulsion by the force of circumstances is that in the case of coercion some person is threatened with dire consequences by a tyrant force, and in order to save himself and avert an expected danger he is compelled to act contrary to his normal duty.

But there is no such threat in the case of compulsion by force of circumstances. In this case the circumstances on the whole develop in such a way that they impose an undesirable situation on the man concerned. He in order to get out of the situation that already exists, is compelled to act contrary to his normal duty. Hence there is a two-fold difference between coercion and compulsion by force of circumstances:

(i) In coercion there is a threat by some human being but there is no such threat in compulsion by force of circumstances. (ii) In the case of coercion the man concerned takes an action to keep off an undesirable situation, but in the case of compulsion by force of circumstances he takes an action to alleviate an existing situation.

Anyway, there is no general rule with regard to the effect of coercion and compulsion by force of circumstances on an obligation. Their effect depends on two things: first, on the extent of harm or injury, that is to be warded off or alleviated; and secondly on the gravity of the act to be performed as a result of coercion or compulsion by force of circumstances. Obviously no action endangering the life of others, causing damage to society or harming religion can ever be allowed to be taken under any pretext. Of course there are certain obligations, which must be discharged even at any loss or damage.

Conditions of Validity:

So far we have spoken about the conditions prerequisite to the applicability of the law to the obliged. In the absence of these conditions no one is bound to carry out an obligation or duty. There are also some other conditions known as the conditions of the validity of an act.

As we know all juristic articles of acts, whether they are acts of worship or transactions, must fulfil certain conditions and have certain qualities so that they may be regarded as valid and sound. Hence a condition of validity is that without which a man will not be considered to have discharged his obligation correctly. An act performed in the absence of any of these conditions is invalid and void.

Like the conditions of the applicability of law, the conditions of the validity of acts are also numerous. They are divided into two broad categories of general and special. The special conditions are those which are peculiar to a particular act and are learnt while learning how to perform that act. Besides them, there exist several general conditions which we propose to mention here.

There are some conditions which are the conditions of applicability and validity both and there are some other conditions which are the conditions of either applicability only or of validity only.

The conditions of validity are again of three kinds. Some of them are the conditions of the validity of both the acts of worship and transactions; some of the validity of the acts of worship only and some of the validity of transactions only.

Mental soundness is a condition prerequisite to applicability and validity both. An insane person is neither fit for the application of law nor are his acts, whether they be acts of worship

or transactions, valid.

For example, if a lunatic performs pilgrimage on behalf of somebody else, his pilgrimage will not be in order. Similarly he cannot offer prayers or fast on behalf of anyone else, nor can he be an intermediary between the imam (one who leads the prayers) and the mamums (followers) or between the various sections of the mamums in a congregational prayers.

Ability like sanity is the condition of the applicability of law as well as that of the validity of acts. Same is the case with non-coercion. The obligation of a man forcibly constrained is waived. If a person under duress carries out a transaction or enters into a marriage contract, his action will be void and invalid.

Puberty is the condition of the applicability of law but not that of the validity of an act. A minor is not himself obligated to observe the precepts of religion, but if he is possessed of enough understanding and can perform a religious act correctly like an adult, his act will be valid. As such in a congregational prayers a child can be an intermediary between the imam and the mamums or between the various sections of the mamums.

He can also perform acts of worship on behalf of others. The fact that puberty is not a condition of the validity of the acts of worship is indisputable. But what about transactions? Some ulema are of the view that puberty is the condition of the validity of transactions also, and as such even a boy possessed of full understanding cannot independently carry out a transaction, neither for himself nor on behalf of anyone else. For example, a minor cannot sell, purchase or let anything nor can he pronounce the marriage formula. Some other ulema hold that a boy possessed of understanding cannot carry out a transaction independently for himself, but he can serve as an agent of others.

Knowledge and awareness and similarly non-compulsion by the force of circumstances are the conditions of the applicability of law but not that of validity. As such, if a person unconsciously performs an act, whether it is an act of worship or it is a transaction, it will be valid if it is by chance perfect in all other respects. Similarly if a man is compelled by force of circumstances to carry out a transaction or a marriage contract, it will be valid. For an example, there is a man who owns a house which he likes very much and is not interested at all in selling it. But all of a sudden for some reason or other he gets badly in need of money and is forced to sell it. In this case his transaction is valid. Take another example. A man or a woman is not in any way inclined to marry. But a disease so develops that the physician advises that man or woman to marry immediately and thus he or she is forced to do so. This marriage is also valid. This shows that from the viewpoint of validity there is a difference between a transaction carried out under duress and a transaction forced by circumstances. The former is not valid, but the latter is.

Here it appears to be necessary to explain why a transaction entered into under duress is not

valid and a transaction forced by circumstances is valid. It may be claimed that the real consent of the doer of the act is lacking in both the cases. Just as a person who sells his house or business under a threat, is not actually willing to do so in his heart of hearts, similarly a person who is forced by circumstances (for example, has to meet the expenses of the treatment of a disease) to sell his house or business, is also not willing in his heart of hearts. A man who is forced to sell his house because he has to pay for the treatment of his ailing son, cannot be happy with this transaction. He must be deeply grieved. As far as the willingness is concerned, the position is not changed by the fact that the man under threat wants to ward off a danger and the man pressed by the circumstances wants to fulfil a pressing need. It also makes no substantial difference that in the case of coercion some human hand is directly involved in the form of some tyrant, and in the case of compulsion by force of circumstances, human hand is involved only indirectly in the shape of exploitation, colonialism etc.

The fact is that the reason why Islam makes a difference between a man under duress and a man pressed by circumstances and regards the acts of the former as invalid and of the latter as valid lies somewhere else. Both the man under duress and the man pressed by circumstances have an urgent need. The need of the man under duress is to avert the mischief of the tyrant which is possible only by taking the action required by him. Here Islamic law comes to the aid of the man under duress and declares that the action imposed on him is illegal and void. On the contrary the man pressed by circumstances is in direct need of money which he tries to obtain through a desperate transaction. Here again the law comes to the aid of the afflicted person and declares the transaction legal and valid. If it had declared it illegal, the result would have, been to the disadvantage of the afflicted person. Suppose in the above instance the sale of the house is declared void. The result will be that neither the buyer will become the owner of the house, nor the seller will become the owner of the money which he badly needs for the treatment of his son. That is why the jurists say that to declare a transaction carried out under duress as illegal is a favour to the man coerced. But to declare a desperate transaction as illegal not being to the advantage of the man hard-pressed by circumstances, will not be a favour to him.

Here arises another question. Is it allowed that other people take advantage of the desperate need of a man in distress and purchase his goods at a price much less than the fair price and regard action as legal? Of course, no. Now a further question arises. Is this transaction, though forbidden, still valid, and if valid, will the exploiter be asked to make up the loss and pay the actual market price? All these points require further discussion.

Mature understanding (rushd) is a prerequisite condition of validity, but not that of the applicability of law. Under Islamic law, it is necessary that anybody, who wants to undertake any act affecting society, for example, entering into a marriage contract or into such independent transactions at the disposal of his personal property, must possess discretion and judgement, that is enough understanding and intelligence necessary to carry out properly the act which he intends to undertake, besides satisfying other general conditions such as puberty, sanity, ability and free-will.

Under Islamic law to be able to marry or to dispose of one's property it is not enough to be sane, to have attained the age of majority and to be entering into a transaction of one's free will. The marriage of a boy or a girl will be operative only if he or she possesses enough intelligence to be able to know what is meant by marriage, what for it is contracted, what responsibilities it entails and how it affects the destiny of an individual. No boy or girl should blindly embark upon an act of such a great importance.

Similarly a boy or a girl having personal property received through inheritance or otherwise, cannot take possession of his or her wealth simply on reaching the age of majority. It is essential that such boys and girls should be tested to see if they

possess enough understanding and judgement to keep and utilize their property and wealth. If they have not developed sufficient judgement and discretion, their property will continue to be administered by their legal guardians. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Put orphans under observation till they are of marriageable age. Then if you find them capable of sound judgement, hand over to them their property."** (Surah an-Nisa, 4:6)

Human Knowledge

Man is self-conscious as well as world-conscious. He wants to have more and more knowledge of himself and the world. His evolution, progress and happiness depend on these two kinds of knowledge. Which of these two kinds of knowledge is of greater importance and which of lesser? It is not so simple to answer this question. Some attach more importance to the knowledge of oneself and others to the knowledge of the world. One reason of the difference in the answer to this question may be a difference in the way of thinking of the East and the West. Another reason may be the difference in the outlook of science and faith. Science is the means of knowing the world whereas faith is the outcome of self-consciousness.

Anyway, science tries to make man aware of himself in the same way as it tries to make him aware of the world. Various branches of psychology bear this responsibility. But the self-consciousness given by science is dull and lifeless. It does not enliven the spirit of man nor does it awaken his dormant faculties. In contrast, the self-consciousness provided by religion makes man aware of his reality, removes his apathy, fires his soul and makes him compassionate and sympathetic. That task cannot be undertaken by any science or philosophy. Not only that, science and philosophy sometimes even add to man's insensitiveness and make him oblivious of himself. That is why many scientists and philosophers are insensitive and selfish like the proverbial dog in the manger. They are unconscious of their selves while many an uneducated man is self-conscious.

Religion calls for self-consciousness. The head lines of its teachings are: Know yourself so that you may know your Lord. Do not forget your Lord so that you may not forget yourself. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Do not be like those who forget Allah, and so He caused them to forget themselves. Such are really the wicked."** (Surah al-Hashr, 59:19)

The Holy Prophet said: "He who knows himself, knows his Lord,"

Imam Ali said: "The most useful of all knowledge is the knowledge of oneself".

He has also said: "I wonder how a man who looks for the things lost by him, does not look for himself".

The basic criticism levelled by the knowledgeable circles of the world against the Western

culture is that this is the culture of knowing the world and forgetting oneself. Here lies the real secret of the fall of humanity in the West. If a man, in the words of the Holy Qur'an, loses himself, what is the use of his gaining the world? As far as we know, it is Mahatma Gandhi, the late leader of India who from this point of view has most aptly criticised the Western culture. He says:

"The Western man can accomplish great feats which according to other nations can be accomplished only by God. But he cannot do one thing. He cannot look into his inner self. This fact alone is enough to prove the worthlessness of the false glitter of modern culture".

"If Western culture has led the Europeans to indulging in wine and sex, it is because they are bent upon forgetting and wasting their 'self' instead of seeking it. Most of their great and heroic achievements and even their good deeds are the outcome of their forgetting themselves. The practical ability of the Western man to make discoveries, inventions and provision of war equipment, originates from his escape from 'self' and not from his extraordinary self-control. If man loses his soul, what is the use of his conquering the world?"

Gandhi further says: "There exists only one truth in the world and that is the knowledge of self. He who knows himself, knows God and all others. He who does not know himself, does not know anything. In this world there exist one force, one freedom and one justice, and that force is that of ruling over oneself. In this world there exists only one virtue, and that is the virtue of liking others as much as one likes oneself. In other words, we should look upon others as we look upon ourselves. All other questions are imaginary and non-existing". (Introduction to My Religion, 1959)

Whether we attach more importance to the knowledge of self or to the knowledge of the world or we attach equal importance to both of them, it is certain that expansion of knowledge means expansion of human life. Life is tantamount to knowledge and knowledge is tantamount to life. He who has more knowledge of himself and the world has more life.

It is obvious that in this context the knowledge of self does not mean. the knowledge of the contents of one's identity card, which include one's name, names of the parents, place of birth, place of residence etc. Nor does it mean the knowledge of one's biology which can be summarized in the knowledge of an animal higher than the bear and the monkey. To make clear what is intended, we refer briefly to the various kinds of self-consciousness. We skip over the figurative and unreal self-consciousness as that of identity card. We have several kinds of real self-consciousness:

I. Innate Self-Consciousness: Man is self-conscious innately. It is in his nature to be self-conscious. It is not so that first man's ego is formed and thereafter he becomes conscious of it. The birth of ego is tantamount to the birth of self-consciousness. At that stage the knower, the knowing and the known are one and the same. Ego is a reality which in itself is the

knowledge of self.

In later stages when man more or less becomes aware of other things he knows himself also in the same way as he knows other things. In other words, he forms a picture of himself in his mind. Technically speaking, he becomes aware of himself through acquired knowledge. But before knowing himself in this way and even before knowing anything else, he knows himself through innate and ever-present self-consciousness.

The psychologists who usually discuss the question of self-consciousness, take into consideration only the second phase of it, that is the acquired mental knowledge, but the philosophers mostly concentrate on the first phase, that is the stage of non-mental innate knowledge. This kind of awareness is the same which in philosophy is described as one of the convincing proofs of the abstraction of ego.

In the case of this kind of knowledge there is no question of any doubt or such questions as: "Am I or am I not? If I am, who am I?" Doubt arises only in the case of acquired knowledge, that is in that case in which the knowledge of a thing is different from its actual existence. But where the knowledge, the knower and the known are one and the same, and the knowledge is of ever-present kind, the existence of doubt cannot be imagined. In other words the existence of any doubt in such a case is impossible.

It is here that Descartes made a basic mistake. He did not realize that 'I am' cannot entertain any doubt, and hence there is no need to remove it by saying: "I think, therefore I am".

Though innate self-consciousness is real, it is not a thing to be acquired. Like the existence of ego it is a basic human characteristic. Hence this inborn self-consciousness is not that self-consciousness which man has been called upon to acquire.

Mentioning the various stages of the development of a foetus in the womb, the Holy Qur'an describes the last stage by saying: **"Thereafter we made it a different creation"**. This verse refers to this very innate self-consciousness which develops as a result of the change of non-conscious matter into a self-conscious spiritual substance.

II. Philosophical Self-consciousness: A philosopher wants to know the real nature of self-conscious ego. Is it a substance or a form? Is it a matter or an abstraction? What relation does it bear to the body? Did it exist before the existence of the body; or did it come into existence alone with it; or has it sprung out of the body? And so on.

At this stage of self-consciousness the main question is: What is the nature and the class of ego? If a philosopher claims to be having self-consciousness, that means that he claims to know the nature, the class and the substance of ego.

III. Universal Self-consciousness: It means the knowledge of self in its relation to the world - the knowledge of the answer to such questions as: Where have I come from? Where am I going to? In this kind of self-consciousness man discovers that he is a part of a whole called the world. He also discovers that he is not an independent being, but he is dependent on some other being. He has not come on his own; does not live on his own; will not go on his own. At this stage man tries to determine his position in this whole known as the world.

These significant words of Imam Ali visualize this sort of self-consciousness: "May Allah bless the man who knows wherefrom he has come; where he is and where he will go".

This kind of self-consciousness creates in man the highest and the most subtle kind of longing for truth which does not exist in animals nor in any other being. It is this self-consciousness which makes man inquisitive, and persuades him to look for satisfaction and conviction. It inflames him with the fire of doubt and denial and makes him waver from one course to another. It is the same fire which impassions the souls of the "Gazalis", makes them so restless that they can neither sleep nor eat, brings them down from the seat of the head of the Nizamiyah, and makes them wander about in the deserts and pass many restless years of their lives away from their hearth and home. It is the same fire which makes the 'Inwan Basris' run after truth from house to house, from street to street and from town to town. It is this self-consciousness that draws the attention of man to the idea of destiny.

IV. Class Self-consciousness: Class self-consciousness is a form of social self-consciousness. It means a consciousness of one's relation to the class to which he belongs. In a class-dominated society from the point of view of the style of life and its blessings and miseries everyone has to belong to a particular stratum or class self-consciousness is the realization of one's class position and class responsibilities.

According to certain theories man has no ego beyond his class. The ego of everyone is the sum-total of his psychic forces, that is the sum-total of his feelings, thoughts, intentions and desires. These all take shape within the framework of a particular class. The proponents of this theory are of the view that man as a mere human being does not exist. His existence as such is only conceptual, not real. What actually exist are the aristocrats and the masses. Man as such could exist only in a classless society, had there been any. Hence in a class-dominated society social self-consciousness is identical with class self-consciousness.

According to this theory class self-consciousness is equivalent to the consciousness of one's own interests, for its philosophy is based on the view that the personality of every individual is governed by his material interests. In any social structure the most important factor is its economic basis. It is common material life and common material interests which give the individuals belonging to a particular class, common conscience, common taste and common judgement. Class life begets class out-look and class out-look makes a man look at the world and society from a particular angle and interpret them as the class interest demands.

Accordingly his efforts and social out-look are always class-oriented. Marxism believes in this kind of self-consciousness, which may be termed as Marxist self-consciousness.

V. National Self-consciousness: It means the consciousness of one's relation to the people with whom one has national and racial ties. Man as a result of passing a common life with a group of people having a common law, a common way of life, a common history, common historical successes and failures, a common language and literature and finally a common culture, develops a sort of fellow feeling and a sense of oneness with that group. As an individual has an ego, similarly a nation also by virtue of its having a common culture develops a national ego. A common culture resulting from belonging to a common race brings about similarity and unity among human individuals. Nationhood backed by a common culture turn 'I's' into 'We' for the sake of which people often make sacrifices. They take pride in its successes and feel ashamed of its failures.

National self-consciousness means the consciousness of national culture, national personality and national ego. Basically there exists no world culture. Various cultures exist simultaneously, and each one of them has its own basic characteristics and distinguishing features. Therefore the idea of one single world culture is absurd. Nationalism which was popular in the nineteenth century and is still more or less being preached, is based on this very philosophy. In this kind of self-consciousness everything, that is evaluation, decision making and orientation, has a national aspect and moves along a national orbit, whereas in class self-consciousness everything has a class aspect.

Though national self-consciousness does not fall within the category of the consciousness of self-interest, yet it belongs to the family of selfishness. It suffers from all the maladies and defects of selfishness, such as prejudice, partiality, over-looking one's own faults, conceit and vanity. As such, like class self-consciousness it also has no moral side.

VI. Human Self-consciousness: It means consciousness of one's relation to all other human beings. Human self-consciousness is based on the philosophy that all human beings taken together, form one single unit and are endowed with a 'common human conscience'. A sense of love of humanity and fellow-feeling exists in all men.

Sa'di, the world famous Persian poet says: "All men are like the organs of one body. A man who has no sympathy with others, does not deserve to be called a human being".

That is the idea which is entertained by those who like Auguste Comte have been and are still in search of a religion of humanity. That is also the fundamental principle of humanism which is more or less a prevailing philosophy subscribed by most of the broadminded people of our times.

Humanism looks at all men as one single unit irrespective of their classes, nationalities,

cultures, religious affiliations and races. It rejects every kind of discrimination and distinction. The charters of human rights issued in the world from time to time are also based on this philosophy. They too preach such a kind of human self-consciousness.

If this kind of self-consciousness is developed by an individual, his feelings and desires become human, his efforts are oriented towards humanity and his friendships and hostilities take a human colour. He begins to like knowledge, culture, healthy activities, human welfare, freedom, justice and kindness, and to dislike ignorance, poverty, cruelty, disease, feeling of suffocation and discrimination. If developed, this kind of self-consciousness, in contrast with national self-consciousness and class self-consciousness, will have a moral significance. Though this kind of self-consciousness is more logical than any other kind of 'it and though there has been much fanfare about it, but in actual practice it is something which is comparatively rare. Why? The secret lies in the actuality of man. The nature of his actuality is different from that of all other existing things, whether they be any kind of inorganic matter, or a plant or an animal. Everything in this world other than man is actually what it has been created. Its nature, its actuality and its characteristics are fixed by the factors of creation. But as far as man is concerned, the stage of what he will be and how he will be, begins after his creation. Man is not what he has been created. He is what he wants to be. He is what he is made by the factors of up-bringing, which include his own will and choice.

In other words, with regard to its nature and quality every thing else is actually what it has already been created, but man from this point of view has been created only potentially. There exists the seed of humanity in him in the form of his potentialities. If it remains unaffected by any pests, this seed shoots up gradually from the existence of man and develops into man's instincts and later into his human and natural conscience.

Contrary to the inorganic matter, the plants and the animals, man has a person and a personality. The person of man, that is the sum total of his physical systems comes to the world in an actually existing form. From the point of view of his physical systems man is as 'actual' as other animals are. But in view of the later development of his human personality he is spiritually only a potential being. Human values are present in his existence, ready to develop and mature.[15]

The spiritual and moral formation of man is one stage subsequent to his physical formation. His body is formed in the womb by the creation factors. But his spiritual and moral systems and the components of his personality have to be developed later. As such every man is the builder and the engineer of his own personality. The brush which paints the personality of man, has been given in his own hand.

Separation between anything other than man and its nature is unimaginable. A stone cannot be separated from its stoneness. The same is true of a tree, of a dog and of a cat. Man is the only existing being in the case of which there is a difference between himself and his nature,

that is between man and his humanity. There are many men who have not been able to attain humanity and like some barbarians and nomads have stayed in the state of animality. There are many others who have been dehumanized, as is the case with most of the quasi-cultured people. As regard to the question how the nature of a thing can be separated from the thing itself when its nature is essential for the existence of everything, it may be said that if the existence of a thing is actual, its nature also will consequently be actual, but if a thing exists only potentially, it will naturally be lacking a suitable nature.

That is the only correct philosophical explanation of the existentialist theory maintaining that existence is basic and that it is man who chooses his nature. The Muslim philosophers, especially Mulla Sadra, have laid ample stress on this point. It is with this view in mind that Mulla Sadra says:

"Man does not belong to one single species, but is a multi-species being. In fact an individual may one day belong to one species and another day to a different species".

From here it becomes clear that the biological man is not the real human being. Biological man only provides the ground where the real man can exist, and in the words of the philosophers, has the susceptibility of having humanity, but does not possess it actually. Evidently it is meaningless to talk of humanity without accepting the basic role of soul.

After going through this preliminary discussion we are now in a better position to understand the meaning of human self-consciousness. As we have already pointed out, human self-consciousness is based on the conception that all men collectively form one unit and are equipped with a common human conscience transcending their religious, national, racial and class conscience.

Now it needs to be explained what kind of men collectively have one ego and are governed by one spirit and who are the people among whom human consciousness develops and creates fellow-feeling? Does it grow and develop only in the men who have actually attained humanity and human values, or in those who have not yet crossed the stage of potentiality or in those who have been transformed into worst animals, or in all of these together?

It is obvious that the question of mutual sympathy and fellow-feeling arises in the case of only those, who are compassionate and feel that all men are the organs of one body.

Naturally all cannot have this feeling. A wild man who is still in the stage of childhood and whose human nature is still dormant, cannot have a feeling of active sympathy. He cannot be governed by a common spirit. The case of the dehumanized is too obvious to admit any comments.

It is only the men who have attained humanity and whose human nature has fully developed,

that actually are the organs of one body and are actually governed by a common spirit.

Only the faithful can be the men in whom all natural values may develop, for it is faith which is the basic and the most important human value.

It is a common faith, not a common race, a common country or blood-relationship that actually turns people into 'we' and infuses a common spirit in them. This miracle is brought about by faith only.

A Moses can have no sympathy with a Pharaoh, nor an Abuzar with a Mu'awiyah.

What is an actual fact as well as an ideal is the unity of those real men who have attained humanity and acquired virtues. That is why the Holy Prophet instead of making a general statement to the effect that all men are the organs of one body, has said: "The faithful are the organs of one body. When one organ is afflicted with pain, fever or sleeplessness, other organs automatically sympathize with it"

There is no doubt that a man who has attained humanity, shows kindness to all human beings or rather to all things, even to the dehumanized men whose nature has been deformed. That is why Allah has described His Prophet as a blessing to the whole universe. Those who have attained humanity, show kindness even to those who are hostile to them. Imam Ali in respect of Ibn Muljam Muradi said: "I like him to live although he likes me to be killed". Only in a society of the faithful it is possible to talk of mutual love and mutual sympathy.

Evidently love of mankind does not mean total peace, lack of responsibility and indifference to what the wicked do. On the contrary real fellow-feeling imposes heavy responsibilities in this field.

In our times Bertrand Russell, the outstanding English thinker and mathematician and Jean-Paul Sartre, the well-known French existentialist thinker, are the two figures best known for their humanism. Incidentally Russell has based his moral philosophy on a principle which is contrary to his humanism in two ways: His philosophy is based on pragmatism in personal gains, that is in ensuring optimum personal gain while abiding by the moral principles. He does not believe in any other moral philosophy. Hence his humanism emanates from giving importance to personal interests only.

That enthusiastic bourgeois, who conquered the past and unfurled the banner of nationalism, has no longer anything to think of except thoughtlessness. The young generation of Europe is standing at the point of absurdity. Today the West is receiving back what it once exported. Social confusion, despair, bewilderment, nihilism are the things which it used to impose on other nations and cultures ..... The nihilist thinks that if a thing is not mine, let it not be of anybody else also .... That is why he tends to self-destruction.

We see another reaction to this situation is the emergence of romantic movement, a sort of pro-human philosophy that has engaged the attention of the Western people on various levels. At one end of it is Russell with his simple and practical views and at the other end is Sartre with his complex and restless philosophy. In the middle there are many broad-minded politicians and economists who try to find a practical solution of the problems facing them and others.

As for Sartre, he, with his free outlook and complex theory of responsibility, is another manifestation of Western spirit which with some sense of guilt wants to make amends for the past mistakes. Like the stoics, Sartre believes in the brotherhood and equality of mankind as well as in the world government and in freedom and virtue being the highest good. He today represents that tendency of the broad-minded people of the West who try to overcome their mental uneasiness caused by the hollowness of the Western culture by throwing themselves on the lap of abstract humanity and replacing religion by humanism. They seek for themselves and the entire West the forgiveness of humanity as a whole which, according to them, has replaced the idea of God.

A glaring outcome of Sartre's humanism is that every now and then he sheds crocodile tears for the alleged injustice done to Isra'il and for the so-called tyranny of the Arabs, especially the Palestinian refugees.

The world has seen and continues to see the practical demonstrations of the humanism of Western humanists, who have signed high-sounding charters of human rights. These demonstrations need no comments.

Social self-consciousness, whether it is national, human or class consciousness has come to be known in our times as the liberal-minded consciousness. A liberal-minded is he who has got some variety of social consciousnesses, is interested in the national, human or class problems and makes efforts to uplift and liberate his class, his nation or the whole mankind. He tries to transfer his consciousness to others and make them work for social emancipation.

VII. Mystic Self-Consciousness: Mystic self-consciousness is the knowledge of self in relation to Allah. According to the mystics this relation is not of that kind which normally exists between two things existing side by side, such as the relation between a man and other members of his society. It is that kind of relation that exists between a main and a subsidiary, or a genuine and a figurative. In the terminology of the mystics themselves, it is the relation between the limited and the absolute.

The feelings of a mystic or a sufi are different from that of a liberal-minded. They do not represent the consciousness of the inner anguish felt by man as a natural need of him. A liberal-minded first becomes aware of the anguish prevailing outside and then feels it within himself. On the other hand, the anguish of the mystic is an inner consciousness of a spiritual

need just as a physical pain is the warning of the existence of a physical need.

The anguish felt by a mystic is different from that felt by a philosopher also. Both of them long for truth. But the philosopher wants to know the truth, whereas the mystic wants to reach it and be absorbed in it.

The anguish of a philosopher is a characteristic that distinguishes him from all other phenomena of nature - the plants, the animals and the inorganic matter. No existing thing in nature except man longs to have knowledge. But the anguish of the mystic is that of intense love and spiritual exaltation. It is a thing which is missing not only in animals, but even in angels whose very essence is self-consciousness.

The anguish of a philosopher is the proclamation of his instinctive need of seeking knowledge, which man by nature wants to acquire. The anguish of a mystic, on the other hand, is the proclamation of the instinctive need of his sense of love which wants to soar and cannot be satisfied unless he touches the truth with his entire existence. A mystic believes that real self-consciousness is nothing other than having knowledge of Allah. According to him, what the philosopher calls the ego of man, is not the real ego. It may be man's spirit, soul or the factors determining his existence. The real ego is Allah. Only by breaking through the factors determining his existence, man can know his real self. The philosophers and the scholastic theologians have written a great deal on the subject of self-consciousness. But no knowledge of self can be obtained through such methods. Those who believe that what these philosophers have discovered concerning self-consciousness, is a fact, are sadly mistaken. They wrongly take swelling for fatness.

In reply to the question, what self and ego are, Shaykh Mahmud of Shabistar has composed his celebrated, mystic poem known as Gulshan-i Raz. In it he says: "When truth assumes a fixed shape because of determining facts, in words it is expressed as 'I' and 'You'. But in reality 'I' and 'You' are mere manifestations of one real existence. Bodies and souls are the reflections of the same light which sometimes appears in a lamp and sometimes in a mirror".

Criticizing the views of the philosophers about soul, ego and self-consciousness he says: "You think that the word 'I' always refers to the soul. You do not know what is self, because you follow reason. 'I' and 'You' are above body and soul, for both of them are a part of the ego. 'I' does not refer to any particular person so that it might refer to his soul. Try to be above all creation. Renounce the world and you will automatically become the world yourself".

So according to the mystic soul or life is not the ego, nor the knowledge of them amounts to self-consciousness. Soul and life are only the manifestations of ego and self. The real ego is Allah. When man annihilates himself and breaks the factors determining his existence, no trace of his life and soul is left. At that time the drop of water which had separated from the sea, returns to the sea and is obliterated there. That is the stage of real self-consciousness. At

this stage man sees himself in everything and everything in himself. Thus he becomes aware his real self.

VIII. Prophetic Self-Consciousness: Prophetic self-consciousness is different from all other kinds of self-consciousness. A Prophet has a Divine consciousness as well as a profane consciousness. He is devoted to Allah as well as to His creation. That does not mean that he believes in any sort of dualism or that half of his attention is towards Allah and another half towards the creation. His goal and objective are not divided at all.

The Holy Qur'an says: **"Allah has not put two hearts into the bosom of any man."** (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:4)

With one heart one cannot have two sweethearts.

The Prophets are the champions of monotheism. There can be no question of any trace of polytheism in all that they do, neither in their doctrine, nor in their goal, nor in their devotion. The Prophets love every particle of the world as a manifestation of the person and the attributes of Allah.

A poet says: "I am happy with the world because this thriving world is His and I love the whole world because the whole world is His".

The love of the holy men for the world is a reflection of their love for Allah and not a love for anything besides Him. They are concerned with the creation only because of their devotion to the Creator, and not for any other reason. Their sole aim and desire is to go up (promote their spiritual power) step by step towards Allah and lift others along with them.

The career of the Prophets begins with an intense Divine love which pushes them forward to the proximity of Allah and quickens their evolution. It prompts them to undertake the journey which is known as 'the journey from the created to the Creator'. The keen and intense feeling of this Divine love does not allow them to rest for a moment till they, in the words of Imam Ali, reach the "place of security".

The end of this journey is the beginning of another journey which is known as the "journey from Allah to Allah". It is during this journey that they are filled with truth and achieve still another kind of evolution.

A Prophet does not stop even at this stage. Having been filled with truth, completed the circle of existence and having become conversant with spiritual stations, he is raised as a Prophet and then begins a third journey of his, which is from Allah to people. But this does not mean his return to the point from where he had started and the loss of all that he had achieved. He returns with all his achievements intact. His journey from Allah to the people is performed

with Allah and not away from Him. This is the third stage of the evolution of a Prophet.

His being raised as a Prophet at the end of his second journey means the birth of a self-consciousness in respect of people out of his self-consciousness in respect of Allah and the birth of devotion to people out of his devotion to Allah.

With his return to people the fourth journey of a Prophet and a fourth period of his evolution begins. During this journey he moves among the people alone with Allah. He moves among them in order to lead them to unbounded perfection by the way of truth, justice and human values and to give a concrete shape to their limitless hidden capabilities.

From here it is clear that what is the final goal to a liberal-minded reformer is only one of the stages to a Prophet to cross which he helps people. Similarly the highest point which a mystic or a sufi may claim to have attained is only a point on the way of a Prophet.

Describing the difference between prophetic and mystic types of self-consciousness, Dr. Iqbal says: "Prophet Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by Allah that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned". These are the words of a great Muslim saint, Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. In the whole sufi literature it will probably be difficult to find words which in a single sentence disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the Prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of unitary experience; and if he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals". (The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam, pp. 143 - 144)

At present we are not concerned whether the mystic interpretations are correct or otherwise. What is an indisputable fact is that a Prophet in the beginning has an intense longing for Allah. That is the only anguish which he feels. He seeks Allah and soars towards Him. He draws on that source. Then he feels sympathy with his fellow-beings. The sympathy of a Prophet is different from that of a liberal-minded reformer or a philanthropist. It is not simply a human sentiment, nor is it like the feeling of pity excited by the sight of a crippled man. A Prophet's anguish is of an entirely different nature and bears no resemblance with the other compassionate feelings and sentiments. His self-consciousness in respect of people is also unique. The fire which inflames his soul is quite different.

It is true that the personality of a Prophet gets so expanded that not only his life gets united with the lives of all others, but his personality takes the whole world under its fold. He feels sorry for the sufferings of mankind. The Holy Qur'an says:

"There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves to whom your misfortune

is too hard to bear and who is eager to see that you prosper." (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:128)

Addressing the Holy Prophet it says: **"Yet you will possibly destroy yourself with grief, feeling sorry for them if they do not believe in this statement (the Quran)."** (Surah al-Kahf, 18:6)

It is true that a Prophet is grieved for the hunger, deprivation, disease, poverty, persecution and harassment of the people. He feels so worried that he cannot sleep peacefully because of his apprehension that somebody might be hungry in the farthest corner of the country.

Imam Ali once said: "What a bad idea it would be that I should ever be overwhelmed by my evil desires and should be led by my greed to choose tasty dishes while there may be in Hijaz or Yamamah somebody who has no hope of getting coarse bread and who has never eaten to his fill! Is it reasonable that I should sleep satiated while there are empty bellies and burning hearts around me?" (Peak of Eloquence, Letter-45)

These sentiments should not be considered to be the result of simple compassion, kind-heartedness or fellow-feeling. A Prophet, being a human being, has in the beginning of his career all human virtues in the same form and colour as other human beings have. But after his entire existence is inflamed by a Divine flame, his virtues take a new shape and a new colour, that is a Divine colour.

Those who are trained by a Prophet are absolutely different from those who are trained by a liberal-minded reformer and the society that is formed by him is different from the society formed by the thinkers and the intellectuals.

The main difference is that a Prophet tries to stir up the instinctive forces of man. He stimulates man's mysterious consciousness and kindles his hidden love. A Prophet calls himself a 'reminder' or an 'awakener'. He creates in man sensitiveness to the entire existence, and transfers his own self-consciousness in respect of the whole existence to other people. As for the liberal-minded reformer, he at the most awakens the social conscience of the individuals and acquaints them with their national or class interests.

[15] Islamic conception of man's innate nature is different from that of Descartes, Kant, etc. Man's innate nature does not mean the actual existence of certain amount of understanding or the actual existence of certain tendencies and desires in him from his very birth, or as the philosophers say that man is born with rationality and will. Similarly Islam does not accept the theory of the Marxists and the Existentialists who deny the existence of innate nature and say that man is born like a blank sheet and is equally receptive to any idea which is imprinted on his mind. According to Islam in the beginning of the period following his birth man has certain potential tendencies towards the realization of which he wants to move. An inner force drives him towards his goal, of course with the help of, external conditions. If he actually

achieves what is befitting of him, he secures what is called humanity. If an actuality other than that is imposed on him by compelling external factors, he becomes a deformed being. That is the only plausible explanation of the metamorphosis of man of which even the Marxists and the Existentialists talk. From the point of view of this school, the relation between man at the birth and the human values and virtues is similar to the relation between a sapling of pear and a fully grown tree of it. An inner link with the help of external factors turns a sapling into a tree. This relation is not similar to that existing between a plank of wood and a chair, for in this case only external factors turn the former into the latter.

Society and History

Introduction

The outlook of a school of thought on society and history and the opinion that it forms about these two, plays a decisive role in the ideology of that school. Hence it is essential to find out how Islam looks at society and history in the perspective of its conception of the world.

It is evident that Islam is neither a school of sociology nor a philosophy of history. In its revealed Book no social or historical problem has been dealt with in the language of these two sciences. The Holy Qur'an also has not used the usual terminology of the relevant sciences while dwelling on any moral, juristic or philosophical subject. None the less, Islamic view on a large number of questions pertaining to these sciences can be derived and deduced from the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

Islamic thinking in respect of society and history, being of special importance, it deserves an elaborate study and investigation. Like many other teachings of Islam, its views on these subjects are also a sign of the depth and profoundness, of its precepts and doctrines. For the sake of brevity we propose to deal with Islamic thinking about society and about history together in one chapter and confine our discussion to only those questions which in our opinion are essential for the identification of Islamic ideology.

We shall begin with society and then take up history. In this respect the relevant questions are as under:

(i) What is society?

(ii) Is man a social being by nature?

(iii) Is the individual that is basic and society only a drawn idea, or the other way round? Or is there a third alternative?

(iv) What is the relationship between society and tradition?

(v) Has the individual a free choice of action in the face of society and social environment?

(vi) What are the basic divisions of society?

(vii) Are all human societies on the whole of one and the same nature and essence, the dissimilarities existing between them being like those existing between the individuals belonging to one species? Or have they divergent natures varying according to their rational differences, temporal and spatial conditions and cultural levels? If so, naturally the various societies shall have various sociologies and in that case each of them can have its own peculiar ideology. We know that all human beings in spite of their regional, racial and historical differences from physical point of view belong to one species, and that is why the same medical and physiological laws apply to all of them. Now the question is whether they form one species from social point of view also and consequently are governed by one moral and social system? Can one ideology be applicable to all mankind or should each society have a special ideology conforming to its special regional, cultural, historical and sociological conditions?

(viii) Are human societies which have been from the dawn of history to the present time scattered, independent of each other and subject to multiplicity and divergence of at least individual nature, advancing towards unity and uniformity? - Is the future of humanity unity of society, uniformity of culture and the disappearance of contradictions and conflicts? Or is humanity doomed to remain culturally and ideologically diverse and divergent?

These are some of the questions about which, from our point of view, it is necessary that the Islamic point of view should be made clear. We propose to discuss these questions one by one briefly.

What is Society?

A group of human beings linked together by certain common systems, traditions, conventions and laws and leading a collective life, forms a society. A collective life does not mean that a group of men should necessarily be living side by side in a particular region and should be utilizing the same climate and consuming the same kind of foodstuffs. The trees of a garden live side by side, utilize the same climate and consume the same type of nourishment. Similarly the herd of deer graze together and move together. But neither the deer of one herd nor the trees lead a collective life nor do they, form a society.

Human life is social in the sense that it has a 'social nature'. Human needs, achievements, enjoyments and activities all have a social nature, for they all are closely linked with certain customs, usages and systems of division of work, division of gains and division of the fulfilment of needs. There are certain dominating thoughts, ideas and habits which keep a

particular group of people united. In other words a society is a collection of people who are compelled by certain pressing needs and influenced by certain beliefs, ideas and ambitions, to be amalgamated together and lead a common life.

Common social needs and the special relations of human life so unite people that they become like passengers travelling together in one automobile, in one aeroplane or aboard one boat heading towards a particular destination where either they all reach or none of them reaches. On their way if they face any danger they face it together and have a common destiny.

The Holy Prophet while describing the philosophy behind exhortation to what is good and restraining from what is evil, has used a beautiful similitude. He has said: *"A group of people embarked a boat which sailed and cleaved the bosom of the sea. Every passenger was sitting in his own place. One of the passengers on the plea that the place where he was sitting exclusively belonged to him, began to make a hole at his place. If other passengers immediately caught hold of his hand and restrained him from making a hole, they would not only save themselves but would save him also".*

Is Man Social By Nature?

The question, what fact ors have made man social, has been under discussion from ancient times. Has man been created social from the very beginning? In other words, has he been created as a part of a whole, and is instinctively inclined, to join its whole? Or is it that he has not been created social, but social life has been imposed on him by external f actors? In other words, is it that man in accordance with his inborn nature tends to be free and is not willing to accept the restriction of collective life, but having learnt by experience that he is unable to lead a lonely life, has perforce acquiesced in the limitations of a collective life? Another theory is that although man is not social by nature, it is not a factor of compulsion which has induced him to become social. But man through his intellect and reason has discovered that by means of cooperation and collective life he can enjoy the bounties of nature in a better way. According to this theory man has agreed to cooperate with his fellow beings by his own choice. Thus man is social either by nature, or by compulsion or by choice.

According to the first theory the social life of man can be compared to the domestic life of husband and wife. Each of the two spouses is a part of a whole and has a natural tendency to join its whole.

According to the second theory, social life is comparable to the alliance and cooperation between the two countries which feel that they are unable to face the common enemy singly, and hence are compelled to conclude a treaty of alliance and cooperation in their mutual interest. According to the third theory, social life is comparable to the partnership of two capitalists who voluntarily agree to set up a commercial, agricultural or industrial concern in order to earn better and higher profits.

In accordance with the first theory the main factor that has made man social is his inner nature; according to the second, it is some external force; and according to the third, it is his rational and calculation faculty.

According to the first theory to be social is a general goal which human nature instinctively aspires to attain; according to the second, it is something accidental and non-essential or in the terminology of the philosophers, a secondary objective; and according to the third theory it is one of the intellectual objectives and not one of the natural goals.

Some verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that sociality of man is a part of his creation. The Holy Qur'an says: ***"0 mankind! We have created you of a mate and a female, and have made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you."*** (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:13).

In this verse in the course of a moral teaching the social philosophy of the creation of man has been enunciated. The verse says that man has been created in such a way that various nations and tribes have been formed. People are identified by means of a reference to the nations and the tribes to which they belong. Thus the verse resolves a social problem, for it is an essential condition --of social life that people should be able to know and distinguish each other. Had there been no national, tribal' and similar other affinities, which are a uniting as well as a distinguishing feature, identification of people would have been impossible and consequently there would have been no possibility of the existence of a social life based on the mutual relations of men. National and tribal affiliations and such other distinctions as those of shape, colour and size fix the identity of each individual. Had all individuals been of the same shape, the same colour and the same features and there had existed no difference of affiliations among them, all individuals would have been identical like the machine-made goods produced by a factory and would have been indistinguishable from one another. Consequently their identification would have been impossible and as a final result no social life could be established on the basis of mutual relations and the exchange of ideas, goods and services. Therefore man's affiliation to different tribes and communities has a goal and a purpose. This kind of distinction is an essential condition of social life. Anyhow, affiliation to a particular race or family is not a matter of pride or the basis of claiming any superiority. In fact the basis of superiority is nothing but human nobility and individuals piety. The Holy Qur'an says: ***"And He it is Who has created man from water and has appointed for him kindred by blood and kindred by marriage."*** (Surah al-Furqan, 25:54)

This verse describes the blood and marriage relationships which bind the individuals to one another and form the basis of their identification, as a creational scheme designed for a sound and wise purpose. At another place the Holy Qur'an says:

"Is it they who apportion the mercy of your Lord? We have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of the world and raised some of them above others in rank so that

some of them may take labour from others; and the mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass." (Surah az-Zukhruf , 43:32)

In the course of our discussion on monotheism (Monotheistic conception of the world) we have already explained the meaning of this verse. Briefly it may be said that the verse indicates that men have not been created alike in regard to their potentialities and talents. Had they been created alike, everybody would have had what the others had and would have lacked what the others lacked. In, that case naturally there would have been no question of reciprocal need of each other and reciprocal service to each other Allah has created men dissimilar to each other in regard to their talents an their physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional potentialities. He has made some of them superior to some others in certain respects, while those others are often superior to these in some other respects. In this way all depend on each other and are naturally desirous to join hands with each other. Thus Allah has paved the way for social life of men. The above verse shows that social life is something natural. It has neither been forced upon man, nor has it been adopted by him of his own choice.

Is the Existence of Society Real and Substantial?

Society is composed of individuals. Had there been no individuals, no society could exist. Now let us see what is the nature of the composition society and what kind of relation there exists between society and man. In this respect the following theories have been put forward:

I. Composition of society is only fictitious and not real. In other words, no actual compounding has taken place. Actual compounding occurs only when as a result of the action and reaction of two or more things a new phenomenon emerges with its own characteristics as we see in the case of chemical compounds. For example, as a result of the action and reaction of the two gases, classed oxygen and hydrogen, a new phenomenon called water emerges with its own properties and characteristics. It is essential that after their combination and amalgamation the original components should lose their individual properties and effects and be totally dissolved into a new compound. In their social life men are never amalgamated in this way, and they are not dissolved into society. Therefore society has not real and substantial existence. Its existence is only fictitious and imaginary. It is individual alone that has a real existence. Therefore, in spite of the fact that human life in society has a social form, the individuals do not make a real compound by the name of society.

II. The second theory is that although society is not a real compound like natural compounds, yet is a synthetic compound. A synthetic compound is also a kind of a real compound, though not a natural one. A synthetic compound is an interconnected whole like a machine, the parts of which are assembled and put together. In a natural compound its component parts lose their identity and their independent effect, and are dissolved in the whole; but in a synthetic compound, the components lose their independent effect but not their identity.

They combine in a particular manner and consequently their effects are also combined. They assume the form of some new effects which are not exactly the total of the independent effects of the components in question. For example an automobile transports goods or persons from one place to another, but this effect neither relates to any part of it, nor to the total of the effects of all the parts in the unassembled state. In a motor vehicle all parts of it are compulsorily interconnected with each other and they all work together. But there is no question of the loss of their identity in the whole. In fact in this case the whole has no existence independent of the parts. The whole vehicle is actually equivalent to the sum-total of its parts plus the special connection existing between them.

The same position is held by society. Society consists of primary and secondary systems and arrangements. The systems and the individuals to whom they are related, are interconnected. Any change in any one of these systems - cultural, religious, economic, legal or educational - bring about changes in other systems also. Thus, social life is the final product of the entire social process. But in this process the individuals do not lose their identity, neither in society as a whole nor in any system of it.

III. The third theory is that society is a real compound like any other natural compound. But it is a combination of minds, thoughts, emotions, desires, wills and lastly of cultures, and not that of physical. Just as the material elements as a result of their mutual action and reaction pave the way for the emergence of a new phenomenon, or as the philosophers say, able to assume a new form, and thus give birth to a new compound, similarly individual human beings with their individual inborn and acquired attainments enter the social life, are spiritually amalgamated and acquire a new spiritual identity known as 'collective spirit'. This compound is natural but of a unique kind. It is natural and actual in the sense that its component parts mutually act, react, cause a change and become the parts of a new identity. Yet it differs from other natural compounds, because in this case the 'whole' or the compound does not exist as a 'real unit'. In the case of other compounds the combination is real, because their component parts mutually act and react in a real manner and in such a way that the identity of the parts is changed, and the resulting compound appears in the form of a real unit, for the plurality of the parts is changed into the unit of the whole.

But in the case of the combination of individuals into society, though this combination is again real because as the result of their actual action and reaction, the individuals acquire a new identity, yet their plurality is in no way transformed into a unity. Any 'overall man' incorporating all individuals does not exist as a unit. Only the aggregate total of individuals can be called the overall man. But his existence is only imaginary.

IV. According to the fourth theory, society is a real compound and, for that matter, a compound par excellence. In the case of all natural compounds their component parts before being combined have their own identity. Apart from their social existence, men are mere animals having only potential humanity or the feeling of human ego. Human thinking and

human feelings such as human emotions and desires appear only in the wake of the emergence of collective spirit. It is this spirit which fills a vacuum and gives man his personality. Collective spirit has at all times been with man and its manifestations have always been visible in ethics, religion, science, philosophy and art. Men influence each other spiritually and culturally and are influenced through and in the wake of this collective spirit, not at any stage prior to it.

In fact the sociology of man precedes his psychology, contrary to the previous theory which maintains that psychology of man precedes his sociology. This theory holds that if man had not acquired social existence and sociology, he would not have reached the stage of acquiring human psyche and individual psychology.

The first theory is purely of the fundamentality of individual only. According to it, society has neither a real existence, nor any law, norm or destiny. It is only individuals who have actual existence and can be identified. The destiny of every individual is independent of the destiny of other individuals.

According to the second theory also what is basic is the individual. The proponents of this theory do not believe that society as a whole and as a combination of individuals has an actual existence. Anyhow, they maintain that the bond existing between the individuals is real and similar to a physical bond. According to this theory though society has no existence independent of the individuals and it is only the individuals who have an actual existence, yet in view of the fact that the individuals in a society are linked with each other like the various component parts of a factory and all their actions are intertwined in a mechanical chain of causes and effects, these individuals have a common destiny, and society being composed of interconnected components, has also identity independent of that of its component parts, that is the individuals.

As for the third theory, it holds that both the individual and society are basic. It maintains that as the existence of its component parts (individuals) is not dissolved into that of society, and the component parts do not cease to exist, as is the case with the chemical compounds, the individual is basic. But society is also basic for the combination of the individuals from spiritual, intellectual and emotional point of view is similar to a chemical combination. The individuals in society acquire a new identity, that is of society, though they retain their own identity as well. According to this theory, as a result of the mutual action and reaction of its component parts, a new and living reality emerges in the form of society. In addition to the individual conscience, will, desire and thinking, a new conscience, a new will, a new desire and a new thinking appear which predominate the individual conscience and consciousness.

According to the fourth theory only society is basic. All that exists is collective spirit, collective conscience, collective consciousness, collective will and desire and collective psychic. Individual conscience and consciousness are only a manifestation of collective

conscience and consciousness.

As for the Qur'anic verses, they support the third theory. As we pointed out earlier, the Holy Qur'an does not deal with human questions in the same way as a book of science or philosophy would. It deals with these questions differently. Anyhow, it mentions the questions concerning society and individual in a way that substantiates the third theory. The Holy Qur'an maintains that the peoples (societies) have a common destiny, a common deed-sheet, and an understanding and consciousness. They obey and disobey. It is evident that if a people were to have no actual existence, there would have been no question of their destiny, understanding, consciousness, obedience and disobedience. This proves that the Holy Quran believes in some sort of collective and social life. Collective life is not a mere allegory. It is as much a reality, as collective death. The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Every nation has a term; when it comes, they cannot put it back a single hour, nor can they put it forward."*** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:34)

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Every nation shall be summoned to its record."*** (Surah al-Jathiyah, 45:28)

This shows that each nation has a record of its deeds, and as a living, conscious and responsible being, shall be summoned to render an account of what it did.

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"To every nation We have made their deeds seem fair."*** (Surah al-An'am, 6: 109)

This verse indicates that every nation acquires a special outlook, a special way of thinking and some special standards. Each nation has a special way of looking at things and understanding them. The judgements of each nation are based on the special standards adopted by it. Each nation has its own taste. The acts which seem fair to one nation, appear to be unfair to another. It is the social atmosphere of a nation which determines the taste of its individual members. The Holy Quran says:

"Every nation tried to seize their Prophet and argued falsely with a view to refute the truth. Then I seized them, and how awful was My punishment." (Surah al-Mu'min, 40:5)

This verse refers to a shameful collective decision with a view to fight the truth. In it, there is also a mention of a general punishment for this collective offence.

In the Holy Qur'an there are instances in which the act of one individual in society has been attributed to the whole society or the act of one generation has been attributed to the subsequent generations.[16] This is possible only in the cases in which a particular people may be of one collective way of thinking and may be having, so to say, one collective spirit. For example, in the story of the tribe of Thamud, the action of one man who hamstrung the

she-camel of Prophet Salih, has been attributed to the whole tribe. The Qur'an says: ***"They hamstrung her"***. Thus the whole tribe has been regarded as culpable and deserving punishment. ***"So your Lord destroyed them"***.

Explaining this point in one of his sermons Imam Ali says: *"Men! The only thing which unites people and provides them with a common destiny is happiness and resentment"*.

When people collectively feel pleased or displeased with something which might have been done by one single person, they are to be regarded as one man and they have a common destiny. The she-camel of Thamud was hamstrung by one individual, but Allah punished the whole tribe, because they all were pleased with his action. Allah has said: ***"They hamstrung her and so they had to regret."*** (Surah ash-Shu'ara', 26:167)

Allah punished them all because they all approved the decision taken by that one man. Hence, when that decision was put into practice it was actually the collective decision of them all. Though hamstringing was the action of one man, Allah has ascribed it to them generally. He said that they hamstrung the she-camel, and not that one of them hamstrung her.

Here there is another point worth-remembering. To be merely pleased with a sin without practically committing it, is not regarded as a sin. If a person feels happy on knowing that some other person has committed or is about to commit a sin, that person himself will not regarded as guilty. Even if a person decides to commit a sin himself, but does not commit it actually, he is not to blame.

The approval of a sin committed by another individual is considered to be a sin only when this approval amounts to some sort of participation in the decision about that sin or in the commitment of it. That is the nature of all collective sins. First the social atmosphere and the collective spirit of people approve the commitment of a particular sin and pave the way for it. Then one member of society whose decision is a part of the decision of other members and whose approval is a part of the approval of others, perpetrates that sin actually. In this case the sin of that individual is the sin of all members of that society. What has been stated by Imam Ali visualizes this kind of situation and inter alia explains the meaning of the above quoted verse. Otherwise mere happiness or resentment not involving participation in the decision and the action of the actual perpetrator is not regarded as a sin.

In the Holy Quran occasionally the deeds of one generation also have been attributed to the subsequent generations. For example the past deeds of the Israelites have been attributed to the Jews contemporary to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Qur'an says that these people deserve humiliation and ignominy because they used to kill the Prophets. That was said because from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an the Israelites of the time of the Holy Prophet were a continuation and an extension of their predecessors who used to kill the Prophets. Not only that, but from the point of view of collective thinking they were exactly those people of the

past who still continued to exist. The French philosopher, Auguste Comte says: "Human society consists more of the dead than of the living". In other words, in all periods of history the people of the past influence mankind more than the living people. The statement that "the dead more than ever continue to rule over the living", means the same thing. (Vide: Raymond Aron's Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I, p. 91)

Al-Mizan, the celebrated commentary on the Holy Qur'an, discussing the question that a society having one spirit and one collective thinking assumes the position of just one human being and all its members become as if they are the organs of one person, says that all the members of society become so absorbed into the personality of society that their joys and griefs become the joys and griefs of society and their prosperity and misery become its prosperity and misery. Al-Mizan continues to say: "The Holy Qur'an has expressed this view regarding the nations and societies having a collective thinking as a result of their religious or national bias, by declaring the subsequent generations accountable for the deeds of the preceding generations. The Holy Qur'an blames the present people for the deeds of their fore-fathers. Obviously this is the only correct way of passing judgement on the people having a collective thinking and a collective spirit". (al-Mizan, vol. IV, p. 112)

Society and Tradition

Should society have a real existence, it must also have its own laws and conventions. But if we accept the first theory about the nature of society as mentioned above, and deny its actual existence, we have to admit that society has no laws or conventions. In case we accept the second theory and hold that the combination of society is synthetic and mechanical, society will certainly be having laws and conventions, but only those which relate to the causative system of its component parts and their mutual mechanical effects. It will not be having any signs or characteristics of life. In case we accept the third theory, society should be having its laws and conventions independent of the laws and conventions of its component parts (individuals), for in this case society enjoys a sort of independent collective life, although not removed from the life of the individuals, but scattered in it. On getting organized into society, the individual human beings lose the independence of their identity only comparatively. Otherwise they retain it to a very large extent. The individual life and individual endowments and acquirements are not totally dissolved in the collective life. In fact according to this theory man lives with two lives, two spirits and two egos, - one being his human life, human spirit and human ego born of his basic nature and the other his collective life, collective spirit and collective ego born of his collective life and absorbed into his individual ego. That is why man is governed both by psychological and sociological laws. According to the fourth theory, the only laws and conventions that govern man as such are the social conventions.

The first person among the Muslim scholars, who mentioned the laws and conventions governing society and distinguished from the laws and conventions of the individuals, and consequently maintained that society had a personality, a nature and a reality, was Abdur Rahman Ibn Khaldun of Tunis. He in his celebrated *Introduction to History* has discussed this

question in detail. Among the modern scholars the first person who discovered the conventions governing the communities, was the French philosopher of the 18th century, Montesquieu. About him Raymond Aron says: "His purpose was to make history intelligible. He sought to understand historical truth. But historical truth appeared to him in the form of an almost limitless diversity of morals, customs, ideas, laws, and institutions His inquiry's point of departure was precisely this seemingly incoherent diversity. The goal of the inquiry should have been the replacement of this incoherent diversity by a conceptual order. One might say that Montesquieu, exactly like Max Weber, wanted to proceed from the meaningless fact to an intelligible order. This attitude is precisely the one peculiar to the sociologist". (Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, vol. 1, p. 14)

The gist of this statement is that behind the so many forms of social phenomena apparently inconsistent with each other, a sociologist discovers such a unity that all the varying phenomena are recognized to be the manifestations of that unity.

In the same way, all the similar social events and phenomena have their origin in a similar sequence of analogous causes. Here is a passage from the observations on the causes of the rise and fall of the Romans: "It is not fortune that rules the world.

We can ask the Romans, who had a constant series of success when they followed a certain plan, and an uninterrupted sequence of disasters when they followed another. There are general causes, whether moral or physical. . . which operate in every monarchy, to bring about its rise, its duration and its fall. All accidents are subject to these causes, and if the outcome of a single battle, i.e. a particular cause, was the ruin of a state, there was a general cause which decreed that that state was destined to perish through a single battle. In short, the main impulse carries all the particular accidents along with it". (Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, vol. I, p. 4)

The Holy Qur'an declares specifically that the nations and societies as such have laws and norms according to which they progress or decline. When it is said that a nation or a community has a common destiny, that amounts to saying that society has its law. In respect of the Israelites the Holy Qur'an says: '

"In the scriptures We decreed for the Children of Isra'il: Twice you shall create disorder in the land and you shall become great tyrants. When the time of the punishment of your first transgression came, We sent against you, Our slaves of great might who ravaged your country. Thus the prophecy was fulfilled. Then We granted you victory over them. We heaped you with wealth and sons and made you a greater host. (We said to you): If you do good, it shall be to your own advantage; but if you do evil, you yourselves shall suffer. So when the time of the punishment of your second transgression came, (We sent against you other slaves of Ours) to ravage you and enter the Masjid in the same way as had the former army entered it, utterly destroying all that they laid their hand on. (And We said): It may be

that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if you repeat (the crime), We shall also repeat (the punishment). We have Hell, a prison for the disbelievers." (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:4 - 8)

The sentence: *"If you repeat (the crime), We shall also repeat the punishment"*, has been addressed to a community and not to any individual. Hence it clearly shows that the laws governing societies are universal.

Compulsion or Volition

One of the basic questions which have been under discussion among the scholars, especially during the last century, is the question of the compulsion or volition of individual spirit vis-a-vis collective spirit. If we accept the first theory concerning the composition of society, regard its composition as merely imaginary and hold that it is only individual who is basic, then there can be no question of collective compulsion, for in that case there would be existing no collective force or power. Hence if there were any compulsion, that would be on the part of an individual or individuals only. No individual would be compelled by society in that sense in which the supporters of the theory of collective compulsion talk of it. But if we accept the fourth theory, look at the individual only as raw material and an empty receptacle from the viewpoint of human personality, think in the terms of exclusive basis of society and regard the entire human personality, human intellect and human will, which from the basis of the volition of an individual, as a manifestation of the collective will and intellect and as a guise which the collective spirit has assumed to promote its ends, there will be left no room for a conception of free will of the individual in social matters.

The French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, who believes that society is basic and of prime importance says: "Unlike such things as eating and sleeping which have animal aspect, all social and, in fact human matters are the product of society, and not that of individual thinking or will. These matters have three characteristics: they are external; they are compulsive and they are general. They are external because they are imposed on an individual by society from outside. They actually existed in society even prior to an individual's being born. The individual accepts them under the influence of society. That is how an individual accepts moral and social customs, religious precepts and the like. The social matters are compulsive in the sense that they impose themselves on the individual and give their own colour to his conscience, judgement, feeling, thinking and sentiments. As these matters are compulsive, they are automatically general and universal also."

However, if we accept the third theory and hold that both the individual and the society are basic, that would in no way mean that the individuals are helpless in human and social matters even if it is conceded that the force of society predominates the force of the individuals. Durkheim believed in compulsion because he ignored the importance of human nature, the development of which is due to basic and substantial human evolution. This human nature gives man a sort of freedom which enables him to resist the impositions of society. That is

how a sort of balance exists in the relations between society and the individual.

The Holy Qur'an maintains that society has a nature, a personality and an actuality. It holds that society lives and dies. It has conscience and the power of obeying and disobeying. At the same time the Qur'an also maintains that the individual has enough power to ignore the dictates of society, if he so desires, and bases its doctrine on what it calls (human) 'nature framed by Allah'.

There were some people in Makkah who described themselves as weak and put forward their weakness as an excuse to shirk their responsibility. In fact they said that they were helpless and could not defy society. The Holy Qur'an says that their excuse was not acceptable because at least they could migrate from that social atmosphere: ***"Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you could have migrated therein."*** (Surah an-Nisa, 4:97)

At another place the Holy Qur'an says: ***"Believers, look after your own souls because he who goes astray cannot harm you if you have the right guidance."*** (Surah al-Mai'dah, 5:105)

In the famous Qur'anic verse there is a reference to a trait of human nature. In that verse of the Holy Qur'an after declaring that He has put the covenant of monotheism in the nature of man, Allah has added: ***"So that you may not say that our forefathers were pagans and we, being their posterity, had to follow them."*** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:172 - 173)

Therefore, with this kind of human nature, there can be no question of any compulsion.

The teachings of the Holy Quran are based absolutely on, a sense of responsibility - responsibility towards oneself and towards society. Exhortation to what is good and restraint from what is evil are a manifestation of the individual's revolt against the corruption and weaknesses of society. The stories related by the Holy Qur'an mostly represent this element of individual's revolt against the atmosphere of social corruption. The stories of Prophet Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa, the Holy Prophet, the People of the Cave, the Believer of the tribe of Fir'awn, all contain this element. .

The root cause of the misconception about the helplessness of individuals in relation to society and social atmosphere is that it has been wrongly presumed that in the case of a real compound its components are fully dissolved and with the emergence of a new reality their plurality is assimilated to the unity of the whole. It is said that there are only two alternatives: either the existence of the personality, freedom and independence of the individuals be admitted and consequently it should be denied that society is an actuality and it is a real compound; or alternatively it should be admitted that society is a real com

pound. In the case of the first alternative the position will be in conformity with the first and the second theories, and in the case of the second alternative it will have to be denied that

individuals have any personality, freedom or independence. That is what the proposition of Durkheim states. Anyway, it is not possible to combine both these alternative theories. As all indications and sociological arguments support the actuality of society, the counter-theory must be regarded as invalid.

As a matter of fact all real compounds are not alike from philosophical point of view. In the lower grades of nature, that is in the case of inorganic matter and lifeless beings, according to the philosophers, each existing thing is governed by one absolutely simple force, and nature has dealt with all of them in a like manner. In their case the component parts are assimilated fully and the existence of the parts is dissolved absolutely into the existence of the whole. That is what we see in the case of water which is a compound of oxygen and hydrogen. But the more the level of a compound goes up the more its components acquire relative independence of the whole, with the result that a sort of plurality in the unity and a unity in the plurality is established. We find that man in spite of his unity enjoys a wonderful plurality. Not only his faculties and subordinate forces retain their plurality to a great extent, but there also exists a sort of permanent conflict and struggle between his inner forces. Society is the most real being in nature, and its component parts relatively enjoy a great deal of independence.

The component parts of society are human beings, who are equipped with their innate intellect and will. Their individual and natural existence precedes their social existence. In addition, as we said earlier the components of the high grade compounds retain their relative independence. In view of all these facts the individual spirit of man is not helpless against the collective spirit of society.

[16] "Therefore woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands and then say: ***'This is from Allah, in order to make some paltry gain. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn thereby!'"*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:79)

"Ignominy shall attend them wherever they are found, except in cases in which they came to terms with Allah and people. They have incurred the wrath of Allah and humiliation has been stamped on them. That is because they used to disbelieve the revelations of Allah and kill the Prophets wrongfully. That is because they disobeyed and used to transgress." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:112)

Social Classification

Although society enjoys a sort of unity, from within it is divided into various groups and classes, which are sometimes incongruous. At least some societies are so. As society possibly has different and sometimes conflicting polarities, it may be said that it has both unity and plurality. According to the terminology of the Muslim philosophers, societies are governed by a specific sort of 'unity in plurality and plurality in unity'.

In the previous chapters we discussed the nature of the unity of society. Now we propose to take up the nature of its plurality.

In this connection there exist two well-known theories. The first one is based on historical materialism and dialectic contradiction. According to this theory, which we will elaborate later, the question of the unity and the plurality of society hinges on the principle of ownership. The societies in which private property does not exist, such as the primitive social society or the social societies that are likely to come into existence in future, are basically unipolar. But the societies, in which private property holds sway, are bipolar. As such society is either unipolar or bipolar, there being no third alternative. In a bipolar society all men are divided into two groups or classes, the exploiters and the exploited or the rulers and the ruled, there being no group or camp other than these two groups or camps. This division becomes applicable to all affairs of society, such as philosophy, ethics, religion and art. In other words, in a bipolar society there are two kinds of philosophy, two kinds of ethics, two kinds of religion and so on, each kind having a particular economic character. If in any case there prevails only one philosophy, one religion or one set of moral rules, that philosophy, religion or morality is always tinted with the colour of that class which has succeeded in imposing its colour on the other class as sometimes happens. There can exist no philosophy, art, religion or morality transcending the economic classes and having no class colour.

According to the other theory the unipolarity or multipolarity of society is not subject to the principle of private ownership. The cultural, social, racial and ideological factors also can make society multipolar. Especially cultural and ideological factors may play a basic role in dividing society into conflicting camps or making it unipolar even without the abolition of private property.

Now let us see what view is held by the Holy Qur'an in regard to the plurality of society. Does it or does it not accept its existence? If it does, does it hold that society is bipolar because of

the existence of private property and exploitation or does it forward some other view?

It appears that the best way or at least a good way of ascertaining the Qur'anic point of view in this respect is to pick out the words having social connotation used in the Holy Qur'an and to see what they signify.

The words with social significance used in the Holy Qur'an are of two catagories: Some of them are related to only one social phenomenon. These words are such as *Millah* (community), *Shari'ah* (Divine law), *Shir'an* (law) *Minhaj* (way of life), *Sunnah* (traditions) etc. These words are outside the scope of our present discussion.

There are other words which serve as a social designation of all or several groups of men. It is by means of these words that we can determine the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an. Such words are: *Qawm* (people), *Ummah* (community), *Nads* (men), *Shu'ub* (nations) *Qaba'il* (tribes), *Rasul* (messenger of Allah), *Nabi* (Prophet), *Imam* (leader), *Wali* (guardian), *Mu'min* (believer), *Kafir* (unbeliever), *Munafiq* (hypocrite), *Mushrik* (polytheist), *Muzabzab* (wavering), *Muhajir* (emigrant), *Mujahid* (warrior), *Siddiq* (truthful, righteous), *Shahid* (witness), *Muttaqi* (pious, God-fearing), *Salih* (virtuous), *Muslih* (reformer), *Mufsid* (corrupter), *Amr bil maruf* (exhorting to do good), *Nahi 'anil munkar* (restraining from evil), *Alim* (scholar, learned), *Nasih* (admonisher), *Zalim* (tyrant), *Khalifah* (deputy), *Rabbani* (Divine), *Rabbi* (rabbi), *Kahin* (sooth-sayer), *Ruhban* (monks), *Ahbar* (Jewish scribes), *Jabbar* (mighty, despot), *Ali* (lofty, sublime, strong), *Musta'li* (superior, master), *Mustakbir* (haughty), *Mustaz'af* (suppressed), *Musrif* (extravagant lavish prodigal), *Mutraf* (affluent, living in luxury), *Taghut* (oppressor, idols), *Mala* (notables, chieftains) *Ghani* (rich), *Faqir* (pauper, poor, needy), *Mamluk* (the ruled), *Malik* (owner, master), *Hurr* (freeman, librated), *Abd* (slave, bondman), *Rabb* (lord, master) etc.

There are certain other words which apparently resemble the above words. They are such as: *Musalli* (worshipper), *Mukhlis* (sincere, devoted), *Siddiq* (truthful, loyal), Munfiq (charitable), *Mustaghfir* (seeker of Allah's forgiveness), *Ta'ib* (repentant) '*Abid* (adorer), *Hami'd* (extoller) and the like. The difference is that these words have been used in connection with the description of certain acts, not to denote any groups of people. As such there is no possibility that these words should signify any social divisions.

It is necessary that the verses mentioning the first set of words especially the verses related to social orientation, should be studied carefully so that it may be ascertained whether they cover two or more than two groups of men. Suppose they all can be accommodated to cover two groups, what are the distinguishing features of these groups?

For example, is it possible that all of them be accommodated to cover the two groups of the believers and the unbelievers, on the basis of their religious orientation, or the two groups of the rich and the poor, on the basis of their economic position? In other words, it is to be seen

whether or not all divisions and classifications in the final analysis turn to one main division, and all other divisions being merely its ramifications? If they finally turn to one division, then what is the basis of it? Some assert that according to the view of the Holy Quran, society is bipolar.

Primarily it is divided into two main groups:

(i) The rulers and the exploiters, and

(ii) The ruled, the exploited and the subjugated.

The group of the rulers is that which has been described by the Holy Qur'an as the 'haughty' and the group of the ruled is that which has been described as the 'oppressed'. Other classifications such as those of the believers and the unbelievers, the monotheists and the polytheists or the virtuous and the corrupt are of subsidiary character. In other words, it is haughtiness and exploitation which lead to disbelief, polytheism, hypocrisy and the like, whereas it is the state of being oppressed that leads to faith, migration, jihad, virtuousness, reformation etc. In other words the root of all those things which have been denounced by the Holy Qur'an as dogmatic, moral or practical deviation, lies in a particular state of economic relationship known as exploitation. Similarly the root of all the things advocated and supported by the Holy Qur'an from dogmatic, moral or practical point of view, lies in the state of being exploited. The conscience of man is by nature subject to the state of his material life. There is no possibility of a change in man's spiritual, psychological and moral state unless the condition of his material life is changed. On this basis the Holy Qur'an holds that the basic and proper form of the social struggle is the class struggle. In other words, the Holy Quran gives more importance to social struggle than to economic or moral struggle; and it maintains that the' infidels, the hypocrites, the polytheists, the corrupt, the wicked and the tyrants are the offshoots of those groups which it terms voluptuous, extravagant, elite, imperial, haughty and the like. The infidels and the wicked cannot emerge from the class opposite to these groups. The Prophets, the Imams, the saints, the martyrs, the emigrants and the faithful all come out of the oppressed class. There is no possibility of their coming out of the opposite class. It is the state of being the oppressor or being the oppressed that frames social conscience and gives a direction to it. All other qualities are mere manifestations of these two states.

The Holy Qur'an considers all the above mentioned groups to be the various manifestations and ramifications of the two diametrically opposite classes: (i) The haughty, and (ii) The oppressed. It has mentioned a number of good qualities, such as truthfulness, chastity, sincerity, worship, insight, kindness, mercy, manliness, submissiveness, generosity, sacrifice, Allah-fearing, and humility, and a number of bad qualities such as, telling lies, treachery, lewdness, ostentation, licentiousness, obstinacy, hard-heartedness, miserliness, arrogance etc. The Holy Qur'an regards the first set of qualities as belonging to the oppressed and the second set of qualities as belonging to the oppressors.

Therefore the state of being the oppressors and the oppressed is not only a characteristic of the two different and opposite classes, but also gives rise to two sets of contradictory qualities. Being the oppressors and the oppressed is the basis of all orientations, leanings and the choices, and is the root of all cultural and civic phenomena. The ethics, philosophy, art, literature and religion emerging from the oppressor class, depict the orientation of that class, serve to justify the status quo and cause stagnation and fossilization. In contrast the ethics, philosophy, literature, art or religion emerging from the oppressed class are always informative, inspiring, dynamic and revolutionary.

The haughty people by virtue of being oppressors and because they possess social distinctions are not broad-minded. They are the obscurantists, conservative and peace-loving. In contrast the oppressed are tradition-breakers, enthusiastic enterprisers and revolutionaries.

In short, according to the proponents of this theory, the Holy Qur'an supports the view that it is economic condition which makes man, determines as to what class he belongs to, gives him direction and determines his intellectual, moral, religious and ideological foundation. A study of the verses of the Holy Qur'an as a whole indicates that this view is the basis of the Qur'anic teachings.

As such the criterion of everything is the class to which a man belongs. We can judge all claims by this standard. On this basis we can accept or deny the claim of anyone asserting that he is a believer, a reformer or a leader. This criterion can be applied even to the claim of a Prophet or an Imam.

Actually this theory is based on a material conception of man and society. There is no doubt that the Holy Qur'an attaches great importance to the social condition of the individuals. But does it mean that the Holy Qur'an considers it to be the basis of all divisions and classifications of man? In our opinion this conception of society is not in conformity with the Islamic outlook on man, the world and society, and is the outcome of a superficial study of the Holy Qur'an. As we propose to study this question in detail under the heading, *Is History Materialistic in Nature?* We withhold our further comments at this stage.

Singleness or Multiplicity of Societies

As we pointed out earlier, for every school this question is important, for on it depends

whether all human societies can follow one single ideology or each nation, community and cultural unit must have its separate ideology. We know that an ideology means a scheme that leads a society to prosperity and perfection. We also know that each species in this world has its own characteristics and capabilities, and hence the conception of prosperity and perfection which awaits each other is different. The prosperity and perfection of the horse are not exactly the same as the prosperity and perfection of the sheep or man.

Therefore, if on the basis of the actuality of societies, we presume that all of them have one nature and essence, and their variations are only within the range of individualistic variations of a species, we can safely say that they may have one single living ideology having enough flexibility to be applicable to all individualistic variations. But if the various societies have different natures and essences, naturally they should have multifarious schemes for their well-being and one ideology cannot be applicable to all of them.

There arises exactly the same question in respect of the changes that overtake societies with the passage of time. Does the essence of societies change in the course of these changes? Are these changes of the nature of a change in species or merely of the nature of a change in some members of it while the nature of the species itself remains essentially unaltered, despite all changes.

The first of the above two questions relates to society and the second to history. We now take up the first question and leave the second one till we come to the discussion of history.

A study of sociology can throw a light on the question whether the various societies primarily and fundamentally have some common characteristics, their variations being only superficial and not basic; or they are basically and by nature different from each other, even though they appear to be similar outwardly. This is a philosophical way of ascertaining the singularity and multiplicity of the things in the case of ambiguity.

Here there is a shorter way also, and that is the way of the study of man himself. It is an admitted fact that all men belong to one species. From biological point of view man has not undergone any biological change since he has appeared. Some scientists say that nature after evolving living beings to the level of man has changed its course. It has shifted the process of evolution from biological and physical changes to social and spiritual development.

Earlier while discussing the sociality of man, we came to the conclusion that as men belong to one species not many, they are social by nature. In other words, man's sociality and his collective spirit are his inborn and essential characteristics. In order to be able to attain due perfection befitting his capabilities, man has a social tendency which paves the way for the emergence of a collective spirit, which in its turn is a means of leading him to his ultimate perfection. The fact that he belongs to a particular species, determines the course of man's collective spirit. In other words, man's collective spirit is in the service of his human nature. So long as his human nature lasts, it will continue to perform its function. Hence it may be said that his collective spirit is a by-product of man's individual spirit, and, in other words it is a part of his nature. As all men belong to one species, all human societies also have a single nature.

Just as an individual sometimes deviates from the normal course of his nature, the same is

true of society also. The diversity of societies is similar to the moral variety of the individuals, which in no case falls outside the human framework. Thus all societies, cultures and the collective spirits dominating societies, in spite of all the difference in their forms, always have a human colour and their nature cannot be other than human.

Of course, if we accept the fourth theory of the composition of society, regard the individuals as merely receptive matter like empty receptacles and deny the principle of true human nature, only then we can consider the hypothesis of the fundamental diversity of societies. But this theory as propounded by Durkheim is not acceptable by any means for the most important question which remains unanswered by this theory is: If collective spirit does not primarily spring from the individual spirit of man and is not a by-product of inborn human nature, then from where has it come? Has it come into existence out of absolute non-existence? To answer this question, is it enough to say that since man has existed, society also has existed.

Moreover, Durkheim himself maintains that social matters such as religion, moral principles, art etc. have existed and will always be existing in all societies. In his own words, they have temporal permanence and spatial diffusion. This in itself proves that man's collective spirit is of one single type and has one single nature.

According to Islamic teachings there is only one religion. The differences of canonical laws are merely subsidiary, not substantial. We also know that religion is nothing but a scheme of individual and collective evolution. This shows that Islamic teachings are based on the conception of the singleness of the type of societies. Had societies been of many types, their evolutionary goals and the ways to attain them would certainly have differed, and there would have been plurality of religions basically different from each other. But the Holy Quran insists that there has been only one religion, not more, in all regions and societies and in all ages and times. From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an religions (in plural form) have never existed. What has existed is the religion (in singular form). All Prophets have preached and taught one religion, one way of life and one goal. The Holy Qur'an says:

"He has ordained for you that religion which He commanded to Nuh, and which We revealed to you and which We commanded to Ibrahim, Musa and 'Isa, saying.- Establish the religion and be not divided in it." (Surah al-Shura, 42:13)

Several verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that during all times and in all places the true Prophets sent by Allah preached the same religion. The idea that fundamentally religion is not more than one is based on the conception that all men belong to one species, not to more than one. Similarly human society as an actuality is basically of one type not of several types.

Future of Societies

We may not admit that modern societies and cultures are basically divergent and dissimilar as far as their nature is concerned, yet it cannot be denied that in regard to their form and quality they widely vary. Now the question is: What is the future of human societies? Will these cultures and civilizations and these societies and nationalities for ever continue to retain their existing position? Or will humanity move towards a single culture, a single civilization and a single society and will all societies one day coalesce and assume a genuine human form? This question hinges on the question of the nature of society and the relation between individual and collective spirits.

It is evident that if we believe in the theory of the fundamentality of human nature and hold that the collective existence of man, his collective life and the collective spirit of society are the means which human nature has chosen to attain its ultimate perfection, it may be said that all societies, cultures and civilizations are marching towards their unification and final amalgamation into each other. The future of human societies is one fully developed world society in which all possible human values will be realized and man will attain true perfection, real well-being and finally genuine humanity.

From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an it is an indisputable fact that ultimately truth shall prevail and falsehood shall be totally vanquished and obliterated. Ultimately piety and the pious are bound to succeed.

Allama Tabatabai in al-Mi'zan says: "A deep investigation into the conditions of the world reveals that in future man also as a part of the world will attain his perfection. The Holy Qur'an says that the establishment of Islam in the world, is inevitable. That is another way of saying that man will reach his complete perfection. When the Holy Qur'an says: ***"Believers, whosoever of you becomes a renegade from his religion, (in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him"*** (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:54) it actually wants to underline what for creation is necessary and to describe man's final destiny". (*Al-Mizan, vol. IV, p. 106*)

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Allah has promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed in the earth as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others) and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and will give them safety after fear. They worship Me. They ascribe nothing as partner with Me."*** (Surah an-Nur, 24:55)

At another place the Holy Qur'an says: ***"Surely My righteous slaves will inherit the earth."*** (Surah al-Anbiya, 21:105)

The author of *al-Mizan* under the heading: *Belief in the Frontiers of the Islamic World, not its Geographical or Contractual Boundary*, says: "Islam has repealed the principle that national divisions have an effective role in forming society. There are two main factors which have

caused these divisions. One of them is the primitive tribal life based on racial affinity and the other is the difference of geographical regions. These are the main causes of the division of mankind into nationalities and tribes. They are also the source of the linguistic and colour differences. These two factors at a later stage were the reason why each nation acquired the exclusive control of some region, called it its homeland and undertook its defence".

Though this is a natural process, yet it involves something which is against human nature that requires entire mankind to live as one whole and one unit. The law of Nature is also based on assembling what is scattered and unifying what is separate. It is through this process that Nature attains its goals. The working of this law can be observed if we study natural phenomena and see how primary matter assumes the shape of elements and then of plants, then of animals and finally of man. Though national and tribal divisions unite the people belonging to one country or one tribe, they at the same time place these people in opposition to other human units. The people of one country regard their fellow-countrymen as their brothers but regard others as aliens, and look at them as if they were lifeless objects only worthy of being exploited. That is the reason why Islam has abolished nationalistic and tribal divisions which split humanity, and instead of race, country- or nationality has declared faith (the discovery of truth which has an equal value to all and to which all are naturally inclined) to be the rallying point of humanity. Even in such matters as marriage and inheritance it declared the fellowship of belief as the criterion". (*al-Mizan, vol. IV, pp. 132 - 133*)

The same book under the heading: *Rightful Religion will Ultimately be Victorious,* says:

"Mankind by virtue of its nature collectively seeks to attain true prosperity and perfection. In other words it wants to reach the highest position of material and spiritual life, and one day it will certainly reach it. Islam, being the religion of true monotheism provides a plan for attaining this cherished goal. The deviations which become the lot of man while traversing the long way to this goal, should not be construed to mean the invalidity of true human nature or its death. Man is actually always directed by his nature. The deviations and errors are-caused by a sort of misapplication of its dictates. Man sooner or later will one day attain that perfection which he seeks by virtue of his nature. This idea may be deduced from Surah ar-Rum, verses 30 to 41. These verses show that the dictates of human nature are immutable, and that man is bound to find his way after making several experiments and going about in different directions gropingly. Once man finds his way, he will stick to it. One must not listen to those who say that Islam is a stage of human culture which has already completed its mission and now it is nothing more than a historical relic which has outlived its utility. Islam, in the sense in which we know and discuss it, is the ultimate perfection which man must attain one day, because that is a requirement of the law of creation". (*al-Mizan, vol. IV, p. 14*)

Some assert that Islam in no way advocates the unification of human cultures and human societies. In contrast it supports and recognizes the diversity of cultures and societies. They say that the personality and the identity of a nation are equivalent to its culture, which represents its collective spirit. The collective spirit of a nation is formed by its special history

which is not shared by other nations. Nature makes man. History makes man's culture, his personality and his real ego. Every nation has its characteristic and distinctive culture that moulds its personality. The protection of its culture by a nation, actually means the protection of its identity.

We know that the personality and the identity of every individual are his own. To give them up and accept some other identity and personality would amount to stripping oneself of one's self, and becoming alienated from it. To every nation any culture other than the one which has become a part and parcel of its life over its long history is foreign to it. Every nation has a particular kind of feelings, and sentiments. Every nation has its own outlook and taste. Every nation has its own literature, music, manners and ways. Every nation likes certain things which are not liked by other nations. The culture of a nation is the outcome of its successes and failures over a long period of its history. It reflects its deprivations and endowments, its contacts, the climate of the region in which it lives, the distinguished personalities it has produced and the waves of immigrations that it has received. The culture of a nation gives a particular shape and a particular dimension to its collective and national spirit. Philosophy, science, literature, religion and ethics are the elements which over successive periods of common history of a human group are so shaped and so combined that they accord a basically distinctive existence to that group in comparison with other groups. This process creates a spirit which forms an organic and vital link between the persons forming that group and converts them into members of a distinct body. It is this spirit which gives this body not only an independent and definite existence but also gives it a sort of life which distinguishes it from all other cultural bodies for ever.

This spirit is clearly felt not only in the collective behaviour and the collective spirit of that body, but also in its reactions to nature, life and all that happens. It may be felt not only in the sentiments, desires and tendencies of that body but also in the works of science and arts which it produces. In short, this spirit can be seen and felt in all spheres of human life, both material and spiritual.

It is said that religion is an ideology, a faith and the sentiments and actions resulting from that faith. As for nationality, it is "personality" and the distinctive features created by the common spirit of the individuals having a common destiny. Hence relation between nationality and religion is the same as exists between personality and faith.

It is also said that the opposition of Islam to racial discrimination and national hegemony does not mean its opposition to the diversity of nationalities in human society. The principle of equality in Islam does not mean the rejection of nationalities. In contrast, it means that Islam does recognize the existence of nationalities as an indisputable fact and an undeniable natural phenomenon. The under-mentioned Qur'anic verse which is often quoted as a proof of Islam's denial and rejection of nationalities, in fact confirms and supports their existence. This verse says: ***"Men, We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the***

most pious of you." (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:13)

This verse first mentions the classification of mankind from the viewpoint of sex, which is a natural classification. Immediately thereafter the verse mentions another classification of mankind from the viewpoint of nations and tribes. This shows that the second classification is as natural and appointed by Allah as the division of mankind into males and females. Hence, it is evident that just as Islam wants a special kind of relationship between man and woman and does not want to abolish sex distinction, similarly it is in favour of the establishment of international relations on the basis of equality and does not call for the abolition of nationalities. The fact that the Holy Qur'an ascribes the making of nationalities to Allah like the creation of sexes, means that the existence of definite nationalities is a natural reality in consonance with the creational scheme. The fact that the Holy Qur'an has mentioned the knowing each other as the philosophy behind the existence of numerous nationalities, indicates that every nation has some special features by means of which it makes itself distinct from other nations and by means of which its personality is crystallized and comes to life.

Thus, contrary to what is generally believed, Islam is not opposed to nationalism as such. In fact it supports nationalism in its cultural sense. What Islam opposes is nationalism in its racial sense. In other words Islam is against racism only.

This theory is again faulty in several respects. It is based on a particular conception of man and a particular view about cultural material, that is philosophy, science, art and ethics. Both these ideas are defective.

It has been presumed that man, from intellectual point of view, that is how he looks at this world and how he perceives it, and from emotional and behavioural point of view, that is what he wants, how he moves and what is his destination, is even potentially devoid of any content and form. All thoughts, sentiments, manners and goals are to him alike. He is like an empty receptacle having no form or colour. Every side of his personality is conditioned by what is subsequently put in him. In fact he acquires his ego, his personality, his ways and manners and his goals and objects from a subsequent input. This input gives him a form and a personality. Whatever form, colour, quality, personality and goal this input, in fact the first input, gives him that is his real form, real colour, real quality, real personality and real goal, for his 'self' is formed by this input. Whatever change in his personality and colour is brought about by an input he receives later, that is only a borrowed and alien stuff because it remains foreign to him, for it is not in consonance with his original personality. It is caused merely by some historical accident. This theory is inspired by the fourth theory about the fundamentality of the individual and society, according to which only society is basic. We earlier commented on this theory.

This view about man is not tenable, neither from philosophical nor from Islamic point of

view. Man by virtue of his nature has, at least potentially, a fixed personality and a fixed goal based on his Divinely appointed innate character which determines his real 'self'. Any distortion of his basic character and his dehumanization should be adjudged by the standard of his essential and innate qualities and not by historical standards. Any culture, which is consistent with man's human nature and which fosters it, is genuine, although it may not be the first culture imposed on him by historical circumstances. And any

culture which is not in consonance with his nature is foreign to him, is a sort of distortion of his identity, and means falsification of his 'self', although it may be a product of his national history. For example, the idea of duality and the sanctification of fire is a distortion of Iranian humanity, though it is believed to be a product of Iranian history. In contrast, the idea of monotheism and the rejection of the worship of everything other than Allah is a return to the real human identity, although it may not be a product of the homeland of the Iranians.

In regard to human cultural material it has been wrongly presumed that it has no definite form and that its form and quality depend on historical factors. After all philosophy is philosophy whatever may be its form. In the same way, science is science; religion is religion; moral principles are moral principles and art is art, whatever their form and colour may be. Their quality and form are relative matters which depend on history. The history and culture of every nation give birth to a particular form of philosophy, religion, ethics and art, peculiar to that particular nation. In other words, just as man as such is without any identity or form and it is culture which gives him these characteristics, similarly the principles and the primary material of human culture are also without any shapes, form or colour. It is history which gives them shape and imprints its mark on them. Some sociologists, such as Spengler etc. have in this respect gone forward to the extent that they claim that even "mathematical thinking is influenced by the particular approach of a culture". (Quoted by Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought, vol. 1, p. 107*)

It is the same theory which is known as the theory of the relativity of human culture. In the *'Principles of Philosophy'* we have discussed the question of the absoluteness and relativity of the ideas, and proved that it is only practical sciences and perceptions that are relative and change with the time and place. Such perceptions do not reflect realities and cannot be a criterion of judging what is right and true and what is wrong and false. In contrast, theoretical perceptions and ideas which are the product of philosophy and theoretical sciences, such as the principles of the religious conception of the world and the primary principles of ethics, are firm, absolute and non-relative. Unfortunately we are unable to pursue this question further.

Secondly, to say that religion is belief and nationality is personal identity, that the relation between these two is that of belief and personality and that Islam confirms and recognizes national personalities as they are, is virtually tantamount to the negation of the most important mission of religion. The mission of religion, especially of a religion like Islam is to impart a world conception based on the correct knowledge of the universal system operating on the principles of monotheism, to build the spiritual and moral personality of man on the basis of

that conception, and to bring up the individuals and society on a basis implying the foundation of a new culture, which is human, not national. Islam offered a culture to the world, which is now known as the Islamic culture. It did not do so simply because every religion on coming in contact with the existing culture of the people more or less influences it and is influenced by it. The reason was that the offering of a new culture was a part and parcel of the mission of this religion. The mission of Islam includes stripping of men of that culture which they have but should not have, furnishing them with that culture which they do not have but should have and confirming to them what they have and should have. A religion that does not interfere in the existing national cultures and is in harmony with all of them, can be of use only once a week in the church.

Thirdly, the verse 13 of the Surah al-Hujurat does not mean to say that Allah created you in two sexes, male and female, so that it may be possible to assert that in this verse first a classification of mankind from the viewpoint of sex has been mentioned and immediately thereafter another classification from the viewpoint of nationality has been given. It cannot be claimed that the verse indicates that the difference in sex being natural, ideologies should be evolved on that basis, not on the rejection of it, and that the same is true of the difference in nationality.

In fact the verse in question means: ***"We created you from a male and a female"***. It either signifies that all men are descended from one single male and one single female; or that all men are alike so far as each of them has one father and one mother, and in this respect there is no question of any distinction.

Fourthly, the phrase: ***"So that you may recognize each other"***; which has been mentioned as the aim, does not mean that the nations have been diversified for this purpose. Hence it is wrong to conclude that the nations must stay as independent personalities so that they may be distinguished from each other. Had this been the intention, the phrase used instead of saying: ***"So that you may recognize each other"***, should have said: *"So that they may recognize each other"*. This verse which is addressed to all the people, tells them that these divisions have a good reason behind them and the reason is that they may be able to recognize each other by means of the tribes and the nationalities to which they belong. We know that this purpose can be served otherwise also, and it is not necessary that the nations and communities should retain their personalities remaining independent of each other.

Fifthly, what we said earlier about the theory of Islam concerning the singleness and multiplicity of the nature of societies is enough to refute the above theory. There we pointed out that the natural advancement of societies is towards the formation of a single society and a single culture. In Islam the philosophy of Mahdism is based on this idea about the future of Islam, man and the world.

What is History?

History can be defined in three ways. In fact there are three branches of history closely linked with each other.

I. History is that branch of knowledge which deals with the past events and the conditions connected with the people of the past as distinguished from the present day conditions and circumstances. All events which relate to the existing time, that is the time when they are recorded, are called the events of the day, are judged, reported, and recorded by daily newspapers. But as soon as its time passes, every event becomes a part of history. So in this sense history means that branch of knowledge which deals with the past events and occurrences and give an account of the past people. Biographies, narratives of the conquests and the stories of the eminent people as compiled by all nations come under this category.

In this sense history means, firstly, the knowledge of the individual matters and the events concerning the individuals, not of general laws, and rules of mutual relations. Secondly, it is a transmitted science. Thirdly, it is a knowledge of 'being', not that of 'becoming'. Fourthly, it is related to the past, not to the present. We in our terminology call this sort of history 'transmitted history'.

II. In another sense history signifies that branch of knowledge which deals with the rules and the traditions which governed the life of the peoples in the past. These rules and traditions are deduced from the study and the analysis of the past events. The subject of the transmitted history and the questions with which it deals, namely the past events and occurrences, serve as the preliminaries of this branch of history. In fact the past events, for the purpose of history in this sense, can be compared to the material which a physicist collects in his laboratory for his study, analysis and experiment in order to find out its characteristics and properties and to discover general laws concerning it. The job of a historian in this second sense is to discover the nature of historical events and to find out their causative relations in order to be able to deduce some general rules applicable to all similar events of the past and the present. We call this branch of history 'scientific history'.

Though the past events are the subject of study in scientific history, the general rules which are drawn from these events do not exclusively belong to the past. They are equally applicable to the present and the future as well. This aspect of scientific history makes it very useful to man as a source of knowledge and helps him control his future.

The difference between the work of a research scholar of scientific history and a natural scientist is that the subject of study of a natural scientist is the material which actually exists at present and hence his entire study and analysis are physical and experimental; whereas the material which is studied by a historian, though existed in the past, is extinct now. Only some information about it and some documents connected with it are at the disposal of the historian. As far as his findings are concerned, he can be compared to a judge of a court of justice pronouncing his judgement on the basis of documentary evidence, not in the basis of the evidence of eye-witnesses. As such the analysis of a historian though logical and rational is not physical. He carries out his analysis in his mental laboratory with the instruments of reasoning and inference. In this respect the job of a historian is like that of a philosopher rather than like that of a natural scientist.

Like transmitted history scientific history also relates to the past, not to the present. It is the knowledge of 'being' not of 'becoming'. But unlike transmitted history it is general, not particular, and it is rational not merely transmitted.

Scientific history, in fact, is a branch of sociology. It is sociology of the past societies. The contemporary societies and the past societies both form the subject of study of sociology. But if we confine our sociology to the study of contemporary societies, scientific history and sociology, become two different branches of knowledge, though still closely related to each other and dependent upon each other.

III. The word, history in its third sense is used to denote philosophy of history, that is the knowledge of the development of society from one stage to another and the knowledge of the laws governing these changes. In other words, it is the science of 'becoming' of societies, not of their 'being' only.

Here the reader may ask whether it is possible that societies should have the two qualities of 'being' and 'becoming' and that 'being' be the subject of one branch of science, named scientific history and 'becoming' be the subject of another branch of science named philosophy of history, while we know that it is not possible to combine these two qualities, for 'being' indicates rest and 'becoming' indicates movement. Societies can have only one of these two qualities. The picture we form of societies can depict either 'being' or 'becoming'.

The respected reader may pose this point in a better and more comprehensive form and say: The picture we form of the world and of society as a part of the world, can on the whole be either a static or a dynamic. If it is static, it can have the quality of 'being', not that of 'becoming'; and if it is dynamic, it will have the quality of 'becoming', not that of 'being'. We find that on this very basis there exists a clear division of philosophical schools. One system of philosophy believes in 'being' and the other in 'becoming'. The school which believes in 'being' maintains that 'being' and 'non-being' cannot exist together for they are contradictory

and the simultaneous existence of contradictories is impossible. If there is 'being', 'non-being' does not exist, and if there is 'non-being' 'being' does not exist. In each particular case either of these two must be chosen. As the world and society being existent, obviously have the quality of 'being', naturally they are governed by stillness or motionlessness. In contrast to this view, the school which believes in 'becoming', maintains that 'being' and 'non. being' can exist at the same time, for the idea of 'becoming' implies motion, which means nothing but that a thing is and at the same time it is not.

The philosophy of 'being' and the philosophy of 'becoming' reflect two completely opposite outlooks on existence. One has to choose either of these two philosophies. If we choose the first one, we must presume that societies have the quality of 'being' only not that of 'becoming'. On the contrary if we choose the second philosophy, then we must presume that societies have the quality of 'becoming' and not that of 'being'. This means that either we have scientific history in the above mentioned sense and do not have philosophy of history or we have philosophy of history and do not have scientific history.

The answer to this question is that this view about existence and non-existence, about stillness and motion, and about the principle of the impossibility of the simultaneous existence of contradictories, is purely a figment of Western idea. This way of thinking is actually due to ignorance of many vital questions concerning existence, especially its fundamentality and some other relevant matters.

Firstly, to say that 'being' is tantamount to stillness, or in other words that stillness means 'being' and motion' means a combination of 'being' and 'non-being' that is a combination of two contradictories, is a grave error, in which some philosophical schools of the West have fallen.

Secondly, the question under discussion has nothing to do with the above mentioned philosophical question. What has been brought out here is that society like any other living being has two types of laws. The first type is that which governs species within the framework of its class, and the second is that which becomes applicable to it with its evolution and transformation to another species. We call the first type the laws of 'being' and the second type the laws of 'becoming'.

Incidentally some sociologists have taken due notice of this point. Auguste Comte is one of them. Reymond Aron says: "Statics and dynamics are two basic categories of Auguste Comte's sociology . . . Statics consists essentially in examining, in analyzing what Comte calls the social consensus (social unanimity). A society is comparable to a living organism. It is impossible to study the functioning of an organ without placing it in the context of living creature. By the same token it is impossible to study politics of the state without placing them in the context of the society at a given moment.... As for dynamics at the outset it consists merely of the description of the successive stages through which human societies pass".

(Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, vol. I. pp. 85, 86)

If we take into consideration every species of living beings, from mammals, reptiles and birds to all others, we find that there are special laws which relate to each class. So long as the members of a particular species continue to belong to it, they are governed by its special laws, such as the laws relating to the embryonic stages of an animal, its health and sickness, its mode of nutrition, its mode of reproduction, its way of rearing its young ones, its instincts, its migration or its mating habits.

According to the theory of the development and evolution of species, in addition to the special laws peculiar to every species and operating within the fabric of its own class, there exist a number of other laws which relate to the process of the evolution of the lower species to the higher species. These laws have assumed a philosophical form and are sometimes called the philosophy of evolution instead of biological laws.

By virtue of its being a living thing, society also has two kinds of laws: biological laws and evolutionary laws. There are some laws of societies which relate to their social life and the origin and decline of their cultures. They govern all societies in all stages of their development. We call these laws the laws of 'being'. There are other laws which relate to the development of societies from one stage to another and from one system to another. They are known as the laws of 'becoming''. When we later discuss both these kinds of laws, the difference between them will become clear.

Thus history in the third sense is the study of the evolution of societies from one stage to another. It is not merely the knowledge of their living conditions at any particular stage or all stages. Not to confuse it with the questions, we call scientific history, we have named this knowledge the philosophy of history. As most people do not differentiate between the questions of non-evolutionary movements dealt with by scientific history, and the question of evolutionary movements of history dealt with by philosophy of history, confusion crops up and leads to misunderstanding.

Like scientific history, philosophy of history is also general, not particular and is rational, not transmitted. But unlike scientific history it is the knowledge of 'being', not of 'becoming'. Moreover, unlike scientific history, the questions with which it deals are not considered to be historical because they relate to the past events alone. They are considered to be so because they represent a process which began in the past, though it still continues and will be drawn to the future. Time is one of the dimensions of these question, not merely the period of their duration.

The knowledge of history in all these three senses is useful. Even transmitted history, that is the knowledge of the conditions and the events connected with the life of the individuals can be useful, inspiring, instructive and constructive. Of course the usefulness of transmitted

history depends on the persons whose life account it is, and on the points which are drawn from their life. Man by virtue of the law of imitation is influenced by the behaviour, conduct, habits and customs of his companions and contemporaries. Just as he learns manners and rules of behaviour from the actual life of his contemporaries and sometimes like Luqman learns politeness from the rude and goodness from the wicked, by virtue of this very law he is benefitted by the account of the people of the past also. History like movies turn the past into the present. That is why the Holy Qur'an mentions useful points from the life of those persons who are fit to be a model for others. About the Holy Prophet it says: **"Surely in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example."** (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:21)

About Prophet Ibrahim it says: **"There is a good example for you to follow Ibrahim and those who are with him."** (Surah al-Mumtahinah, 60:5)

When the Holy Qur'an mentions any individual as a pattern or a paragon of perfection, it does not take into consideration their worldly personality. It refers to their human and moral personality only. The Holy Qur'an describes as a sage even a black slave, who is not a king, nor has he the reputation of being a philosopher, nor is he a wealthy person. He is only a clear-sighted slave. The Holy Qur'an makes his name synonymous with sagacity. The believer of the tribe of Fir'awn and the believer of al-Yasin also belong to this category.

In this book we have discussed society and history from the viewpoint of the Islamic conception of the world. Here our attention is confined to scientific history and the philosophy of history, for only these two fit in within the framework of world conception. For this reason we propose to discuss these two subjects a little further. We now begin with scientific history.

Scientific History

Let us recall that, as we pointed out earlier, scientific history is based on the idea that independently of individuals, society has its own personality and primary importance. Should it be presumed that society has no independent personality, nothing will be left except the individuals and the laws governing them, and consequently scientific history, which is the knowledge of the rules and the norms governing societies will become meaningless. History can have laws only if it has an independent nature and it can have an independent nature only if society also has a nature. In connection with scientific history the following questions are to be examined:

(i) As mentioned earlier, scientific history is based on transmitted history, which may be called the material to be analyzed in the laboratory of scientific history. Therefore, first of all it must be ascertained whether transmitted history is reliable. If it is not reliable, any investigation into the laws governing societies would be absurd and meaningless.

(ii) But if it is admitted that transmitted history is reliable and that society has a nature and a personality independent of the individuals, then it will be possible to deduce laws and general rules from historical events provided it is also admitted that the law of causation is operative in the domain of human affairs, that is the matters which are subject to human will and choice, and that such matters include historical events.

Otherwise, historical events cannot be considered to be subject to any rule or regulation which may be generalized. So the vital question is whether history is governed by the law of causation, and if it is, how man should use his will and choice?

(iii) Is the nature of history materialistic? Is it mainly governed by a material force, all spiritual forces being subsidiary to this main force, or is the case other way round, the main force by which history is governed being spiritual, and the nature of history being idealistic? Or, as a third alternative, is the nature of history multilateral, and it is governed by two or more material and spiritual forces, operating in a more or less harmonious or sometimes conflicting system?

I. Reliability or Unreliability of Transmitted History

There are some people who hold a very poor opinion about transmitted history. They are of the view that all reporters of historical events on account of their selfish interests, or their national and religious bias or because of their social associations and attachments, have more or less distorted and falsified almost all descriptions of historical events, and brought history into a form of their own liking. Even those who regarded it as immoral to forge and alter history intentionally, exercised selection in the narration of events and invariably reported only that which was not inconsistent with their own objectives and ideas. Though they did not add anything of their own while narrating events, they refrained from reporting that which was contrary to their feelings and beliefs. By making selections of their own liking, they shaped history as they liked. An event or a personality can be objectively studied and properly analysed only when complete relevant material is placed at the disposal of the researcher. If only a part of it is shown to him and another part is concealed, the result will obviously be a one-sided and defective picture.

These pessimists have the same opinion about transmitted history as some pessimistic jurists have about the hadith and religious traditions. The attitude of these jurists has been termed 'closing the door of knowledge'. The critics of transmitted history can also be described as obstructionists. Someone of them has sarcastically remarked that history is an account of the events which never took place, compiled by someone who did not witness them. A journalist is reported to have said: "Facts are sacred, but one has freedom of faith". There are others who are not so pessimistic, but still prefer to accept the philosophy of scepticism.

In the book 'What Is History?' Sir George Clark has been quoted to have said:

Knowledge of the past that has come down through one or more human minds, and has been processed by them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter .... The exploration seems to be endless, and some impatient scholars take refuge in scepticism, or at least in the doctrine that, since all historical judgements involve persons and points of view, one is as good as another and there is no 'objective' historical truth. (E. H. Carr, What is History? p. 8)

The fact is that although it is not possible to trust blindly the reports of even the reliable transmitters, yet history contains a good number of such indisputable facts that they are as good as the principles of other sciences and which can easily be checked by any researcher. Secondly, a researcher can himself scrutinize the relevant details in order to ascertain the veracity of many reports and then draws his own conclusions. Today we find that the researchers have proved the unreliability of the reports of many events which were for centuries widely accepted as facts. The story that the books of the Alexandrian library were put to fire, appeared for the first time in the 7th century of Hijrah era - yes, in the 7th century - and gradually gained so much currency that it found its way into most of the books of history. But in the last century the researchers proved that this tale was totally baseless and an invention of some prejudiced Christians. It also happens that for sometime a truth remains concealed, but subsequently it becomes known to everybody. For these reasons one must not be totally pessimistic about historical reports.

II. Principle of Causation

Is history governed by the principle of causation? If it is, the occurrence of every event must be considered to be inevitable and unavoidable, and it must be conceded that a sort of compulsion rules over history. If it is so, then where does the principle of human freedom and volition stand? If historical events are really inevitable, then no individual can be accountable, and no individual deserves any appreciation and praise or any reproach and censure. If the principle of causation is not admitted to be operative, then there can be no universal laws, and if there are no universal laws, history can have no law or norm, for the laws are a subsidiary of generality and generality depends on the principle of causation. That is the problem with which scientific history as well as philosophy of history are confronted. Some people who tend to believe in the principles of causation and generality, reject the principle of human freedom and volition in its true sense. What they accept in the name of freedom is not actually so. In contrast, some others accept the principle of freedom, but deny that history is subject to any definite law. Most sociologists hold that the principles of causation and freedom cannot exist together. They generally tend to accept causation and to reject freedom.

Hegel following the example of Marx, supports historical compulsion. From the view-point of Hegel and Marx freedom is nothing except consciousness of historical necessity. In the book, 'Marx and Marxism' Engels has been quoted as having said: "Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him freedom is the appreciation of

necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood. Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and those which govern the bodily and mental existence of men themselves".

After describing briefly that under special historical conditions man can and he should step forward in the direction determined by these conditions, the same book says:

"Identifying and understanding these given conditions, render human action more effective. Every act in the opposite direction amounts to resisting and obstructing the historic course. To act in the direction determined by the historic course means moving within the course of history and participating in the process. But the question, as to what is meant by freedom, still remains to be answered. The Marxist school answers that freedom of the individual lies in his appreciation of the historical necessity, and the social movement towards which the whole course of history is directed".

It is evident that these statements do not solve any problem The real question is whether man has the power to control the historical conditions. Is he able to give them a direction of his choice or to change their course?

If man is unable to direct the course of history or change it, then obviously for his survival and evolution he has no alternative but to follow the course of history. Otherwise he cannot survive. Now the question is whether man has any choice to follow or not to follow the course of history, and whether in view of the principle of the superiority of society to man and the theory that the conscience, feelings and sentiments of an individual are solely the product of social and historical conditions, especially the economic conditions, is there any scope left for man's freedom?

Further, what after all does the statement that freedom is the knowledge of necessity mean? Is a man who has been entrapped in a flood and knows fully well that in a short while he would be swept to the depth of the river or a man who has fallen from the top of a hill and knows that because of the force of the law of gravity in a few moments he will be smashed into pieces, free in being plunged into the river or falling on the side of the hill? According to the theory of historical materialism, the social conditions put restrictions on man, give him direction, build his conscience and personality and determine his will and choice. In the face of the social conditions he is just like an empty receptacle and merely a bundle of raw material. When man is believed to be a product of his social conditions, not a producer of them, and it is alleged that from existing social conditions determine the subsequent lot of man, evidently it is not man who determines the future course of social conditions.

Obviously this kind of freedom can have no meaning at all. The fact is that human freedom

cannot be imagined without accepting the theory of natural human disposition which means that in the process of basic and general movement of the world man has an additional dimension which forms the preliminary basis of his personality and which matures under the impact of external factors. This existential dimension gives man his human personality and enables him to dominate history and determine its course. We have already discussed this point earlier while discussing society under the heading, 'Determinism and Volition' and shall explain it further while dealing with the role of the heroes under the heading, 'Dimensions of History'.

Freedom of man is not incompatible with the law of causation nor with the universality of historical questions, nor with the fact that history is subject to certain laws. That man may choose a definite and irreversible course in his social life out of his own free will means compulsion with volition and is different from blind compulsion swaying man and his will.

There is another difficulty about the universality of historical questions and their being subject to certain laws. The study of historical events shows that occasionally some minor and accidental events have changed the course of history. Of course accidental events, contrary to the notion of some uninformed persons, do not mean the events having no cause. They are only the events that are not brought about by a general and universal cause and hence have no general rule. Now it is evident that if it is admitted that the events having no general rule play an effective role in historical movements, history will be devoid of every law, rule, norm and definite course. But we know that accidental historical events have affected the course of history. They are proverbially known as Cleopatra's nose. Cleopatra was a famous queen of Egypt. The examples of minor and accidental events which have changed the course of history in the world are innumerable.

Edward Hallett Carr in his book, What is History? says: "The other source of the attack is the famous crux of Cleopatra's nose. This is the theory that history is, by and large, a chapter of accidents, a series of events determined by chance coincidences, and attributable only to the most casual causes. The result of the Battle of Actum was due not to the sort of causes commonly postulated by historians, but to Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra. When Bajazet was deterred by an attack of gout from marching into central Europe, Gibbon observed that "an acrimonious honour falling on a single fibre of a man may prevent or suspend the misery of nations". When King Alexander of Greece died in the autumn of 1920 from the bite of a pet monkey, this accident touched off a train of events which led Sir Winston Churchill to remark that "a quarter of a million persons died of this monkey's bite". Or take again Trotsky's comment on the fever contracted while shooting ducks which put him out of action at a critical point of his quarrel with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin in the autumn of 1923: "One can foresee a revolution or a war, but it is impossible to foresee the consequences of an autumn shooting - trip for wild ducks".

In the world of Islam the event of the defeat of Marwan bin Muhammad, the last Umayyad Caliph is a good example of the intervention of an accident in the destiny of history. In his

last battle with the Abbasids he strongly felt the need of passing water. For that purpose he went aside to ease himself. By chance an enemy soldier passed by that place and seeing him alone, killed him. The report of his having been killed spread like wild fire among his soldiers and as they had not anticipated such an eventuality, they were so upset that they took to their heels. Thus the rule of the dynasty of Umayyad came to an end, and it was on this occasion that it was said: "A kingdom was swept away by urine".

After explaining that every accident is the outcome of a sequence of a cause and effect that annuls another sequence of a cause and effect and not a happening without any cause at all, Carr says: . . . "How can one discover in history a coherent sequence of cause and effect, how can we find any meaning in history, when our sequence is liable to be broken or deflected at any moment by some other, and from our point of view, irrelevant sequence?"

The answer to this problem depends on the question whether society and history by nature have or have not a direction. If history by nature has a direction, the impact of minor incidents will be insignificant. In other words minor incidents may change the position of some pawns on the chess board of history, but they cannot affect the general course of history. At the most they can accelerate or slow down its course for a moment. But if history is devoid of nature, personality, and a course determined by that nature and personality, then it will have no definite course and no universal law, and will be totally unpredictable.

From our point of view, as we believe in the nature and personality of history and maintain that its nature and personality are the product of a combination of the personalities of human individuals and hence evolutionary, the accidental events do not harm to the universality and compulsion of history.

Montesquieu has beautifully described the role of accidents in history. We reproduce below a part of what he has said in this respect: . . . "If the outcome of a single battle, i.e. a particular cause, was the ruin of a state, there was a general cause which decreed that, that state was destined to perish through a single battle".

He also says: "It was not the affair of Poltava that ruined Charles. Had he not been destroyed at that place, he would have been in another. The casualties of the fortune are easily repaired; but who can be guarded against events that incessantly arise from the nature of things?"

III. Is History Materialistic in Nature?

What is the nature of history? Is the real nature of history cultural, political, economic, religious, or moral? Is it material, spiritual or a combination of the two? These are the most important questions concerning history. We cannot have a correct and sound understanding of history unless these questions are resolved.

It is evident that all the above mentioned material and spiritual factors have been and are effective in the texture of history. The question is which factor is of primary importance and determining nature? The question is which of these factors forms the real spirit of history and indicates its identity? Which of these factors can explain and interpret all other factors? Which of these factors forms the infrastructure of history and all other factors being its superstructure?

Generally speaking the informed people are of the opinion that history is a multi-motored machine in which all motors are independent of each other. What they mean is that history is multi-natured, not uni-natured. But the question is: if history is really multi-motored and multi-natured, what will happen to its evolutionary progress and advancement? History cannot move along a definite evolutionary line if it is driven by several independent motors, each motor generating its own movement and driving history in a direction of its own choice, unless we presume that the above-mentioned factors are mere instincts of history, which has a spirit transcending these instincts and it is that spirit which with the help of its various instincts drives history in a definite direction and forms its real identity. Anyhow, in this case history will be uni-natured, for its nature will be that which has been described as its spirit and not those factors which have been termed its instincts.

In our times a new theory has gained many supporters. It is known as historical materialism or dialectic materialism. Historical materialism means economic interpretation of history and economic and historical interpretation of man, but not human interpretation of economics or history. In other words, historical materialism means that history has material nature and dialectic existence. What is meant by material nature of history is that the basis of all historical movements and phenomena of a society is its economic organization which covers its material products and the forces, relations and the system of its production. According to this theory it is economic organization which gives shape and direction to all social and moral phenomena, including science, philosophy, ethics, religion, law and culture. With a change in the economic organization all these things undergo a corresponding change.

As for dialectic existence of history, that means that the evolutionary movements of history are caused by a series of dialectic contradictions, having a special interrelationship. A dialectic contradiction is different from non-dialectic contradiction for in the case of a dialectic contradiction, every phenomenon compulsorily nourishes within itself a negation of it, and as the result of this inner contradiction, develops to a higher stage which is a synthesis of the two earlier stages.

Thus historical materialism implies two ideas. Firstly that the nature of history is materialistic; secondly, its movements are dialectical movements. We propose to discuss in a subsequent chapter dealing with the development and evolution of history.

The theory of the materialistic nature of history is based on a series of certain principles

which are either philosophical, psychological or sociological, and this theory in its turn, leads to a number of other theories, concerning ideological problems. In order to make this important point clear, especially in view of the fact that certain modem Muslim writers have claimed that though Islam does not accept philosophical materialism it does accept historical materialism, and have built their historical and social theories on this presumption, we feel that it is necessary to deal with this point in somewhat detail. For this purpose we propose first to discuss the two principles on which this theory is based and the results which ensue from them. Then we will study this theory from scientific as well as Islamic point of view.

Basic Principles of Historical Materialism

I. Priority of Matter over Spirit: Man has body as well as spirit. Human body is a subject of biological, medical, physiological and other studies, whereas his spirit and spiritual affairs are the subject of philosophical and psychological studies. Ideas, beliefs, feelings, tendencies, theories and ideologies are all psychological subjects. The principle of the priority of matter over spirit means that psychological matters are not basic. They are only a series of material reflections emanating from actual matter and cast on the nerves and the brain.

The value of the psychological matters is limited to their being a link between man's inner material faculties and the outside world, are not to, be treated as a force separate from other material forces governing the existence of man. For the purpose of illustration, psychological matters may be compared to an automobile lamp. An automobile cannot move at night without a lamp. It proceeds only in the light of its lamp, But what brings an automobile into motion is its engine not its light.

If psychological matters, that is ideas, beliefs, theories and ideologies fall in line with the process of the material forces of history, they help history move forward. But they themselves cannot cause any motion, nor are they considered to be a force independent of other material forces. Basically, psychological matters are not a force. Hence it is not correct to say that they are a force, but have no material reality. The real forces which affect human existence, are only those forces which are known as material forces and which may be measured by material standards.

Thus psychological matters are not capable of initiating any movement or giving a direction to a movement. They are not regarded as a lever for the movement of society. Psychological values can support and direct material values, but they cannot become the source or the object of any social movement.

On this basis we should go deep while interpreting history and should not be deceived by the appearances. At some historical juncture it may appear that an idea, a doctrine or a belief has stirred society and driven it to an evolutionary stage, but on correct dissection of history we will find that beliefs or doctrines are not of primary importance. They are merely reflection of

those material forces of society which stir society sometimes in the garb of doctrines and beliefs also. The material force which pushes history forward is, from technical point of view, the system of production and from human point of view the underprivileged and exploited classes of society.

Feuerbach, a well-known materialist philosopher, from whom Marx picked up many of his theories says: "What is a theory? What is a praxis? What is the difference between the two?" He himself answers this question as follows: "Everything which is confined to the mind is theoretical. Whatever moves the minds of many is practical necessity. It is action which unites many minds together and organizes the masses, and in this manner finds a place for itself in the world".

His disciple Marx writes: "It is obvious that the weapon of criticism cannot replace criticism of weapons. A material force can be crushed only by a material force".

Marx, who does not believe in the independence of nonmaterial forces, maintains that non-material forces can do no more than enhancing the value of material forces. He says that as soon as a theory or a doctrine is deeply rooted among the masses, it turns into a material force. The principle of superiority of matter to spirit and of the body to mind is one of the basic principles of philosophical materialism, which holds that mental forces and spiritual and moral values are not basic.

In contrast to this principle there is another philosophical principle based on the fundamentality of spirit. According to this principle, it is not possible to explain and interpret all the real dimensions of existence through matter and material aspects. Spirit is a reality in the domain of man's existence and spiritual energy is independent of all material energies. Accordingly all psychological forces, that is intellectual, doctrinal, religious and sentimental forces are regarded as an independent factor inducing certain movements both on the level of the individual and society. It is possible to use these levers for the movement of history. In fact many movements of history have actually originated exclusively from these levers. Especially the human movements of lofty character, whether individual or social, spring direct from these forces, and that is how they acquire their nobility.

The psychological forces often bring the physical and material forces under their influences and give them direction not only on the level of voluntary activities, but even on the level of mechanical, chemical and biological activities also. The effectiveness of psychological suggestions in the treatment of physical diseases and the extraordinary effectiveness of hypnotic operations belong to this category and are undeniable.

The powers of knowledge and faith, especially the power of faith and more particularly where these two powers harmonize, are a great and useful force. They can play an extraordinary and dynamic role in pushing forward or changing the course of historical movements.

The prime importance of spirit and spiritual powers is one of the fundamental principles of philosophical realism.

II. Precedence of Material Needs to Spiritual Needs: Man, at least as far as his social existence is concerned, has two kinds of needs. His material needs include food, water, shelter, clothing, medicines and the like. His spiritual needs are education, knowledge, literature, art, philosophical ideas, faith, ideology, adoration, moral principles and such like things. Man always has both kinds of these needs. The only question is that of precedence. Which kind of needs has precedence of the other, material or spiritual? Or are both of them of equal importance? The advocates of the fundamentality of material needs hold that material needs have a precedence not only in the sense that man attends to them before attending to his spiritual needs but also in the sense that his spiritual needs are a by-product of his material needs. Man has not been born with two kinds of needs, or two kinds of instincts. He has been born with only one kind of needs and one kind of instincts. The only thing is that his spiritual needs are his secondary needs, and in fact only a means of meeting his material needs in a better way.

That is why his spiritual needs in regard to their form, quality and nature are subservient to his material needs. In every age man's material needs have assumed a particular form and quality in accordance with the development of the implements of production. His spiritual needs being a by-product of his material needs, naturally have a form, a quality and the characteristic in agreement with his material needs. As such there exist two kinds of precedence between material and spiritual needs, one pertaining to the existence of the needs and the other pertaining to their nature. Man's spiritual needs are a by-product of his material needs. They are also subordinate to his material needs in their form and other characteristics. In his book Historical Materialism P. Royan quotes Hymen Louis as having said as under in his book, Philosophical Ideas:

"Man's material course of existence led him to propound theories corresponding to the material needs of the time about his world, society, art, and morality; all intellectual manifestations are the resultant products of material conditions and the mode of production".

That is why every individual's way of thinking on scientific matters, his philosophical ideas, his taste, his aesthetic and artistic sense, his moral evaluation and his religious inclination follow his way of living and earning his livelihood. This principle when applied to an individual, is expressed thus: "Tell me what he eats, I shall tell you how he thinks". When this principle is applied to a society, it is said: "Tell me to what extent the implements of production have developed in that society and what kind of economic relations exist between its members, I shall tell you what ideology, what philosophy, what moral principles and what religious tenets are popular in it".

Directly contrary to this theory is the theory of the independence of spiritual needs. According

to that theory, although in a human being material needs appear earlier from the point of view of time as is evident from the state of the infant who immediately after it is born, looks for milk and the breast of mother, yet gradually the spiritual needs which are latent in human nature unfold themselves and bloom in such a way that in his mature age man sacrifices his material needs for the sake of his spiritual needs. In other words, for man his spiritual pleasures are basic as well as stronger than his material pleasures and material urges. This point has been magnificently discussed by Ibn Sina in his book, al-Isharat. The more a man receives human education and human training, the more his spiritual needs, his spiritual pleasures and finally his spiritual life overshadow his material needs, his material pleasures and his material life. In primitive societies of course material needs prevail upon spiritual needs, but as a society develops, spiritual needs attain greater importance. They secure the position of a human goal, whereas the material needs are reduced to that of mere means.

III. Precedence of Action to Thought: Man is a being who thinks, understands and acts. What is more important, his action or his thought? Which one of these two constitutes his essence? Does the dignity of man depend on his action or his thought? Which of these two makes him?

Historical materialism believes in the independence of action and its precedence to thought. It regards action as fundamental and thought as subsidiary. On the other hand ancient logic and philosophy considered thought to be the key of thinking. According to the old system of logic thought was divided into perception and affirmation, and each of them was further divided into axiomatic and theoretical. According to that system of logic and philosophy the essence of human ego was regarded as a mere idea. The perfection and nobility of man consisted in his wisdom. A perfect man was equal to a man of wisdom.

But historical materialism is based on the principle that action is the key and the criterion of thought. The essence of man is his productive activity. Man is known by his activity which moulds him. Marx has said: "The entire world history is nothing but a creation of man through human labour".

Engels has said: "Man himself is a creation of action", for instead of brooding on natural hardships he exerts himself to conquer his external environment and in this way (through a revolutionary action against aggressive tyrants) he dashes forward and makes a society of his own choice".

The author of Marx and Marxism says: "Whereas in the philosophy of being (a philosophy that interprets the world in terms of 'being' as opposed to the philosophy of 'becoming', which interprets the world in terms of motion. Marxism belongs to the group of the philosophies of 'becoming') it was customary at first to set forth the ideas and the principles from which practical conclusions are derived; praxis (practical philosophy), on the other hand, regards action as the origin and basis of all thought. It replaces the faith in thought by the philosophy

of power". In agreement with Hegel, it asserts: "The real being of man, in the first instance, is his own action". In this belief he joins the German thinker who reversed the famous phrase, "In the beginning there was the Word" - in which the Word signifies spirit, for it is through the word that the spirit expresses itself - and declared: "In the beginning there was the Act".

This theory is one of the principles of Marxist materialism and is known as practical philosophy. Marx picked it up from his materialist predecessor and preceptors, Feverbach, and Hegel.

Entirely contrary to this principle is the philosophical principle of realism, which holds that thought and action influence each other reciprocally, though thought has precedence to action. According to this philosophy the essence of man is thought (essential knowledge of one's own existence). Man through his action and contact with the outside world acquires his informative material about the world. He cannot embark on any activity of knowing things unless his mind is enriched with this raw material. After collecting his material his mind uses the data provided by action in different ways such as generalization, deduction and demonstration. Thus action paves the way for the acquisition of correct knowledge. Knowledge does not mean merely a simple reflection of external material on mind. Knowledge becomes available subsequent to this reflection through a mental process emanating from the immaterial substance of spirit. Thus action is the source of thought. But at the same time thought also is the source of action. Action is the criterion of thought and at the same time thought is the criterion of action. Anyhow, this is not a case of vicious circle. It is nobility of his character, his knowledge, his faith, his dignity, his self-respect and his action that make a man a human being. Man accomplishes action and is himself produced by it. This is a distinguishing feature of man. No other being shares with him in this feature, which springs from his special Divine creation.

Anyhow, man performs action in the creative sense, whereas action makes man in the preparatory sense. Man actually creates his action, but action does not actually create man. Anyhow, action and its practice and repetition paves the way for the creation of man from within. In all cases in which the mutual relationship between two things is creative and imperative on one side and preparatory and potential on the other side, the creative and imperative side always has precedence.

In short man whose essence is a sort of knowledge (essential knowledge of one's own existence), has a reciprocal relation with action in the sense that man creates and develops action and action develops man. But in view of the fact that man is the creative and imperative cause of work whereas action is merely a preparatory and potential cause of man, man has precedence to action, not action to man.

IV. Precedence of Social Existence of Man to His Individual Existence: In other words, the principle of the precedence of man's sociology to his psychology.

From biological point of view, man is the most perfect of all animals. He is capable of making a particular kind of evolution and self-building called human evolution. He can enjoy a special personality formed by human dimensions. Under the impact of a series of experiences and learning, man acquires an intellectual, philosophical and scientific dimension, and under the impact of certain other factors he gets another dimension, called moral dimension. It is in this dimension that he creates values and moral 'musts' and 'must nots'. Similarly there are man's artistic and religious dimensions also. In his intellectual and philosophical dimension man discovers a number of principles and general laws which thenceforth form the basis of his thinking. Similarly in the course of his moral and social appreciation he gets at some absolute and semi-absolute values. All these human dimensions combined together constitute human existence.

Human dimensions are entirely the consequence of social factors. Man lacks all these dimensions when he is born. At the time of his birth he is merely a bundle of raw material capable of assuming any intellectual or emotional shape, his final shape depending on the factors which influence him later. In the beginning he is like an empty vessel which is to be filled from outside. He is like a blank magnetic tape on which any sound can be recorded and which plays back whatever is recorded on it. In short, it is external social factors called social work which build man's personality and convert him from a thing to a person. Man in himself is only a 'thing' and only under the impact of social factors, becomes a 'person'.

In his book , Historical Materialism P. Royan reproduces what Plekhanov has said in his book, Fundamental Problems of Marxism. He says: "The characteristics of a social system are determined by the current level of development of the means of production of society. It means that when the stage of development of the means of production is determined, the characteristics of the social order and the psychology (of the people) related to it, and all the other corresponding relations within the system, on the one hand, and the ideas and the pace of progress, on the other, are also (of their own accord) determined".

In the same book, it is further stated that: "When psychology, through the means of production, is determined, ideology too, which is deeply rooted in the psychology of the people, is also consequently determined. But as the ideology at a particular historical stage is the product of social requirements, and as it always continues to protect the interests of the ruling class, it necessarily strengthens and perfects the existing social structure. Hence the social structure in class-societies, which comes into existence for protecting the ruling class and propagating its ideology, is in reality. the result of the social order and its requirements, and, in the last analysis, is the product of the character of the modes and the means of production. For instance, the church and the mosque are for preaching of the religious beliefs, which in all the religions are based upon the faith in the final judgement or resurrection. The belief in resurrection is the logical outcome of the particular social order that is based upon the division of society into classes, which in its turn is the product of a particular stage of development of the means of production. Hence, belief in resurrection is the product of the

means of production (at a particular stage of social development)".

In contrast to this principle there is another anthropological principle which is based upon the view that the foundation of human personality, is the basis of man's thinking and higher tendencies, and is itself inherent in his creation. It is true that contrary to Plato's well-known theory, man does not come to the world with a ready-made personality, but still he receives the basic features of his personality from his creation, not from society. If we wish to use philosophical terms, we may say that the main ingredients of the human dimensions, whether religious, moral, philosophical, artistic, technical or amorous, are the form and the distinctive features of man's species and his rational soul which are formed simultaneously with the factors of creation. Depending on the personal capabilities of a man, society either tends him and brings him up or distorts him. In the beginning the existence of rational soul or intellectual faculty of man is only potential. It becomes actual gradually. From the viewpoint of his thinking, his tendencies and his material and spiritual leanings and sentiments man is like any other living being. In the beginning all his faculties exist potentially and then in the wake of certain basic developments gradually shoot up and grow. Man under the impact of external factors nurtures his natural personality and brings it to perfection or sometimes distorts it and turns it away from the normal course. This is the same principle which in Islamic sciences is described as the principle of fitrat (natural state) and is considered to be the most basic principle.

According to this principle man's psychology has precedence to his sociology. In fact man's sociology depends on his psychology. According to the principle of nature, when a child is born, though he has neither perception nor conception, neither confirmation, nor human aptitudes, he comes to this world with human dimensions in addition to animal dimensions. It is these dimension which gradually form the basis of human thinking. Without them logical thinking would not be possible. It is these dimensions which bring high and noble tendencies into existence. It is these dimensions which are regarded as the real basis of human personality.

According to the theory of the precedence of man's sociology to his psychology, man is merely a receiving being and does not automatically move in any particular direction. He is a bundle of raw material. To him it makes no difference what shape is given to him. He is a blank tape, to which it is immaterial what sound is recorded on it. This raw material does not tend to any particular shape, nor can any shape be called its natural shape. This tape does not require the recording to any particular sound and it cannot be said that if any other sound will be recorded on it that sound would be inconsistent with the reality of the tape. As the raw material bears the same relationship to all shapes, this tape bears the same relationship to all sounds.

But according to the principle of the basicity of nature and the precedence of man's psychology to his sociology though man in the beginning lacks any actual perception and any actual tendency, yet from within himself he dynamically advances towards a series of primary

judgements known as a priori or primary principles and towards a series of higher and sublime values which constitute the standards of his humanity. Following the entry from outside into his mind of a number of simple conceptions forming the basic material of thinking, these principles shoot up and grow into theoretical or practical affirmations and the latent tendencies become conspicuous.

In the present circumstances, man, for example, asserts that 2x2=4 and thinks that this rule is absolute and true in all times and all places. According to the first theory this judgement of his is the product of the special conditions of his environment. These special conditions have given him this rule, and his judgement is his reaction to the environmental conditions. In a different environment and under different conditions he could have thought differently. For example, he could have believed that 2x2=26.

But according to the second theory, what the environment gives to man is only the conception of 2,4,8,10 etc. As for the judgement that 2x2=4 or 5x5=25, that is something inseparable from the structure of human spirit, and cannot take any other form under any circumstances. Similarly the human desire to attain perfection is also an essential part of human spirit.

V. Precedence of Material Aspect of Society to Its Intellectual Aspect: Society has many sectors and consists of various organizations: economic, cultural , political, administrative, religious and judicial organization etc. From this viewpoint society is like a full-fledged building comprising the drawing-room, the bed room, the kitchen, toilet etc.

Among the social organizations there is one organization which is virtually the real foundation of the whole of society, for its whole structure stands on it. If it were to collapse, the whole building would collapse automatically. This is the economic structure of society, or in other words, all that relates to the material production of society including the production implements, economic resources, production relations etc.

Implements of production are the most basic section of the structure of society. They continuously change and develop, and each stage of their development leads to a paticular kind of change in the production relations, making them different from what they were previously. Production relations include all the rules and regulations regarding the form of ownership and the contractual relations between man and the products in a society. Any compulsory change in these relations automatically leads to a change in all legal, intellectual, moral, religious, philosophical and scientific principles of man. In short it may be said: 'Economy is the foundation of society'.

In the book, 'Marx and Marxism', Marx has been quoted as having said to the following effect in his book entitled Critique of Political Economy:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into specific relations that are indispensable

and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness".

The same book quoting a letter of Marx says: "Assume a particular state of development in the productive facilities of man and you will get a corresponding form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular degrees of development of production, commerce, and consumption and you will have a corresponding organization of the family, or orders or of classes, in a word a corresponding civil society".

Peter explains the views of Marx as under:

"In this fashion Marx has compared the society to a building, the base and foundation of which are the economic institutions, whose superstructure (the building itself) is comprised of political, religious, and legal patterns, customs and norms. As in the case of a building, it depends upon the position of its base and foundation, the economic forms (relations of production) and technical modes are also dependent upon and associated with the modes of thinking, the political system and the customs, and each of them is subject to economic conditions".

The same book quotes from Lenin's book, Marx-Engels Marxism as having written in the Capital, vol. III as under: "The mode of production manifests itself in the human activity in relation to nature and, following that, in social conditions and intellectual patterns resulting from them".

In the Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx says:

"My investigations led to the result that the legal relations as well as forms of the state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life... the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy".

Marx in his book, Poverty of Philosophy has written: "Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces, men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you a society with the feudal lord; the steammill, a society with the industrial capitalist".

The theory of the precedence of the material arrangements of society to all other social systems is in keeping with the theory of the precedence of action to thought. In fact the two theories are identical with the only difference that the first theory is operative on individual level and the second on social level. In view of the fact that the supporters of this theory also hold that the sociology of man has precedence to his psychology, it may be said that the precedence of individual action to individual thought is a manifestation as well as a result of the precedence of material arrangement to all other social arrangements. On the contrary if we maintain that the psychology of man has precedence to his sociology, the precedence of the material arrangement of society would be the result of the precedence of individual action to individual thought.

The material arrangement of society which is described as the economic structure and economic basis also, consists of two parts, the first part being the implements of production which are the outcome of man's contact with nature, and the other part being the economic relations of the members of society in the field of the distribution of wealth. These relations are sometimes described as productive relations also. The implements of production and the productive relations put together are mostly described as the mode of production or the method of production. Incidentally it may be noted that these terms as used by the leaders of historical materialism are not free from ambiguity and their meanings have not been exactly defined. When they say that economy is the infrastructure and the material arrangement of society has precedence to all other arrangements, by economy they mean the complete production system, that is the implements of production as well as the productive relations.

Here there is a point to be noted well. As it is evident from what the leaders of historical materialism have said, the infrastructure of society in itself is a two-storied structure. Its real base and foundation is formed by the implements of production which in reality are the labour embodied. It is the embodied labour which necessitates the growth of special economic relations for the purpose of the distribution of wealth. These

relations reflect the degree of the development of the implements of production and in the beginning not only are in harmony with them, but also encourage their use and provide the best means of their proper utilization. They are just like a dress that fits the body of the implements of production. But the implements of production continue to develop, and with their development the harmony between the two parts of the productive machinery is upset. The productive and economic relations, that is the laws which were previously in harmony with the implements of production become too tight a dress for their developed form and become a barrier for their further progress. Thus a contradiction arises between the two parts of the production machinery. At last new productive relations, corresponding to the new implements of production develop, and thus the infrastructure is totally changed. In the wake of its change the entire legal, philosophical, moral and religious superstructure also undergoes a corresponding change.

If we take into consideration the prime importance of embodied labour, that is the implements of production and pay attention to the fact that Marx is one of those sociologists who maintain that the sociology of man has precedence to his psychology and that man as such is a social being or, in his own words, is a "sui generis" being, we can determine the philosophical role of labour from the view-point of Marxism. It may be mentioned that the philosophical role of labour is the main point of Marxist philosophy. Nevertheless scant attention has been paid to it.

Marx thinks about human existence or work and working existence of man much in the same way as Descartes, Bergson and Jean Paul Sartre respectively thought about rational, continuous and revolting existence of man.

Descartes says: "I think; therefore I am". Bergson says: "I continue. therefore I am". Sartre says: "I revolt; therefore I am"; and Marx wants to say: "I work; therefore I am" .

By employing these diverse methods none of these philosophers intends to prove the existence of human ego in matters other than thinking, continuity and revolt. Some of them even do not believe in any existence of man not related to these matters. They only want to define inter alia the essence of humanity and the existential reality of man.

Incidentally Descartes wants to say: "My presence is equal to the presence of thought; eliminate thought and I am nothing". Bergson wants to say: " The existence of man is just the same as the existence of continuity and time." Saitre says: "The essence of humanity and the real existence of man lies in his spirit of revolt. If you take away this spirit from him, he will no longer be a man. " Marx also wants to say: "The entire and real existence of man is his work. Work is the essence of humanity. I am for I work, not in the sense that work is the proof of my existence, but in the sense that work is tantamount to my very existence. In reality work is my existence."

That is what Marx wants to point out when he says: "To a socialist the entire so called history of the world is nothing but man's creation through human labour;" or when he differentiates between man's consciousness and his real existence and says: "It is not the consciousness of men, that determines their existence; on the contrary it is their social existence that determines their consciousness". He also says: "It is not their will on the basis of which people make decisions. The real basis is the individuals and their material and existential conditions". Explaining the real individuals, he further says: "They really are not what they can imagine themselves to be. They are how they produce and make. In other words, they are how they act within definite material conditions and limits quite independently of their will. Engels says: "Economists say that labour is the source of all wealth. In fact labour for man is more than that. It is the basic condition of the existence of entire human life. At first sight it may be said that it is labour that has created man himself".

Marx and Engels have, in fact, took over this theory of the role of labour in the existence of man from the writings of Hegel, who for the first time said: "In the first instance man's real existence is his work".

From the above, two points are clear: (i) that from the point of view of Marxism, human existence of man is social, not individualistic, and (ii) that the existence of social man is his social work, that is his embodied labour, and his individual work like his individual feelings and every other social work, such as philosophy, ethics, art, religion etc. are a mere manifestation of his real existence and not his real existence itself.

Hence, man's real evolution is the evolution of his social action. As far as his intellectual, sentimental and emotional evolution or the evolution of the social system is concerned, it is a manifestation of the real evolution, not the real evolution itself. In fact the material evolution of society is the criterion of its immaterial evolution, just as work is the criterion of thought. The correctness or incorrectness of a thought should be measured by the standard of work and not by any intellectual or logical standard. The criterion of the immaterial things is the evolution of the material things. If it is asked which philosophical, moral religious or artistic school is more progressive, no intellectual or logical standard can provide an answer to this question. The sole criterion by which the progressiveness of any school may be judged is to find out what conditions and which degree of social work, that is the development of the implements of production, have produced that school.

To us this way of thinking appears to be amazing, for we hold that the real existence of man is his ego, which is an immaterial substance, and that this ego is an off-shoot of the essential movements of nature, not a product of society. But a man like Marx who thinks in material terms only and does not believe in any immaterial substance, should interpret man and his reality from biological point of view and say that the essence of man is nothing but his physical structure, as was asserted by the past materialists like those of the 18th century. Yet, Marx rejects this view and asserts that the essence of man materializes in society, not in nature. What materializes in nature is potential and not actual man. Apart from that, Marx should either consider thought to be the essence of humanity and regard action as its manifestation; or the other way round consider action to be the essence of humanity and regard thought and ideas as its manifestation. Marx has to choose the second alternative, for he thinks in material terms only. He not only believes in the fundamentality of matter and denies the existence of any immaterial substance in the individual, but believes in the materiality of history also.

In fact, Marx is so engrossed in the philosophy of labour and holds such an idea of social labour that it may be said that according to his way of thinking men are not those who walk in the streets, think and choose, but the real men are the tools and the machines which, for example, run the factories. The men who speak, walk and think are only the images of the real men, not the men themselves. According to the idea that Mark holds of social labour and the

implements of production, these things may be described as living beings which automatically, blindly and unaffected by the will of the 'image of man' (not man himself), grow and develop and bring the 'show men' despite their will and thinking power, under their control and pull these show-men behind them.

It may be said readily that what Marx has said about the supremacy and domination of social labour over man's consciousness and will, is the same thing as what the philosophers have said about man's unconscious physical activity, such as the activity of the digestive system, the heart, the liver etc. under the influence of a hidden will. According to these philosophers all desires, inclinations and all the functions of bodily systems which appear at the level of conscious mind, are in reality a network of natural needs. They are arranged by a secret psychical power and the conscious mind does not know where and how they occur. This psychical power appears to be similar to what Freud has termed unconscious mind which, according to him, dominates the conscious mind.

But actually what Marx asserts is different from what Freud or past philosophers have maintained. What they have said relates to a part of the conscious mind and the domination of a hidden mind over it. Further, what they speak of, is not a thing outside the existence of man, but what Marx says is outside of it. If the theory of Marx is correctly adjudged, it will be found extremely amazing from philosophical point of view.

Marx calls his theory a discovery and compared it to the well-known biological theory of Darwin, who proved that the developments outside the will and consciousness of animals gradually and unconsciously bring about changes in their bodies over a long period. Marx also claims that some blind event (the real existence of man itself is a blind event) gradually and unconsciously brings about changes in man's social structure, that is in all those things which Marx calls superstructure and in many of those which he calls infrastructure, that is socioeconomic relations. Marx says: "Darwin has called the attention of scientists towards the history of natural selection, the formation of organs in plants and animals corresponding to the means of production necessary for their survival. Isn't the history of generation and formation of organs producing the social human being, i.e. the material basis of all types of social organizations, worthy of such a treatment? ... Natural selection lays bare the modes of human action vis-a-vis nature; the mode of production lays bare man's material existence, and as a result, the source of social relations, thought, and intellectual products that spring from it".

Hence, from what has been said it is clear that the theory of historical materialism is based on several other theories, some of them being psychological, some sociological and some others philosophical and anthropological.

Conclusions: From the theory of historical materialism we may draw a number of conclusions which affect the strategy and the shape of the social aims in a practical manner. It is not hypothetical or speculative theory having no effect on social behaviour. Now let us see

what conclusions we may draw from it.

I. The first conclusion relates to ascertaining the identity of society and history. On the basis of the materiality of history the best and the most satisfactory way of analysing and understanding the historical and social events is the study of their economic basis. Without knowing this economic basis it is not possible to understand the historical phenomena accurately, for it has been presumed that the nature of all social changes is economic, though they may appear to be exclusively cultural religious or moral. In other words, all cultural, religious and moral developments are a reflection of the economic position of society and are caused by it. The old philosophers were also of the view that the best and the most perfect way of knowing the identity of the things was to know the causes which produced them. Therefore if we admit that economic structure of society is the main cause of all social developments, then its socioeconomic analysis is the best way of understanding history. As a cause has precedence to its effect at the stage, of occurrence, similarly it also has precedence at the stage of knowing and proving. Hence economic situation is not only the cause of other developments but its knowledge helps in understanding them and proving their existence.

Discussing this point the book, Revisionism from Marx to Mao says: "For analysing social revolutions, one must not judge social conflicts in political, legal, or ideological terms; on the contrary, they are to be interpreted in terms of the contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production. Marx has seriously warned us of the dangers of such a judgement, firstly because such a judgement is not realistic, for it replaces the cause, which economic changes and contradictions are, by the effect, i.e. political, legal, and ideological forms, which are the effects. Secondly, such an interpretation is superficial; as instead of probing deeply into the real causes, it only touches upon the surface, and what is apparent reality is considered to be sufficient for explanation. Thirdly, it is illusory; because the superstructures, which are on the whole ideological, are nothing but inaccurate images of the reality. Depending on inaccurate image instead of a realistic analysis of the problem under study, will no doubt leads us into confusion and error."

The same book, reproduces from another book containing the important writings of Marx and Engels as follows: "As in the case of an individual mere self-introspection does not help us to make any judgement, in the same way, during the period of disturbance and chaos, the ideas of that period should not be treated as helpful for judging its character."

Marx tries to negate the role of knowledge, thought and the tendency of innovation which are normally considered to be the basic factors of development. For example, Saint Simon, many of whose ideas have been adopted by Marx, in respect of the role of the tendency of innovation in development says: "Societies are governed by two moral forces which are equally strong and operate alternately. One is the force of habit or custom, and the other is inclination towards innovation and creativity. After some time customs necessarily become evil ... At such times, the need for something new begins to be felt. It is this need which really constitutes the revolutionary situation."

In respect of the role of beliefs and ideas in the development of societies Proudhon, another teacher of Marx says: "Political forms of nations have been the manifestations of their beliefs. Movement of the forms, their transformation and annihilation are the tests which reveal the value of the underlying ideas, through which an absolute and unchangeable reality is revealed to us gradually. But we see that all political institutions necessarily seek adjustment with the existing social conditions in order to be saved from inevitable death."

Despite all that his preceptors have said Marx asserts that every social change is above all a socio-economic necessity resulting from the polarization of the nature and the form of civic society, productive forces and social relations.

Marx wants to say that the instincts of innovation and belief and faith are not stimulating enough to bring about social, changes. On the contrary it is socio-economic necessity that gives birth to the tendency of innovation or belief and faith.

If in the light of his view about the materiality of history, we analyse, for example, the Iranian - Greek wars, the Crusades, the Islamic conquests, the Renaissance of the West or the constitutional Revolution of Iran, it will be a mistake if we confine our study to the superficial forms of these events, which may be political, religious, or cultural, and adjudge the events on the basis of these forms. It will be equally wrong to judge them even by the feelings of the revolutionaries themselves who may have regarded their movement, as political, religious or moral. In order to arrive at a correct conclusion, we must pay attention to the real nature of these movements which is economic and material.

Even today the young contemporary Marxists try to interpret every historical movement by uttering a few sentences about the economic situation of the period concerned even if they have no knowledge of it.

II. The law that governs history is inexorable, unexceptionable and beyond the will of men. In previous chapters we discussed whether history is governed by some causative laws implying causative necessity. There we pointed out that some philosophers on the plea of accident and some on the plea that man had a free choice, denied the supremacy of causative law and consequently the existence of causative necessity and the inexorable norms of society and history. But we proved that the theory of these philosophers was baseless, and that the law of causation and the causative necessity governed society and history as much as all other things. At the same time we also proved that history being a unit endowed with real existence and having a special nature, was governed by a number of universal and compulsory laws. We termed this kind of compulsion as philosophical compulsion. This compulsion requires that the course of history should proceed according to some definite and compulsive laws.

As for the compulsion of history in which the Marxists believe and which is also described as

economic compulsion, it is a special variety of philosophical necessity. This theory of compulsion of history is a mixture of two other theories. One of them is that of philosophical necessity which requires that no phenomenon comes into existence unless it is necessary and that every phenomenon becomes inevitable and unavoidable with the appearance of its causes. Conversely the existence of a phenomenon is impossible in the absence of its causes. The other theory is that of the precedence of the material basis of society to all other determining factors of it. We have already explained this theory. The essential result of these theories is the theory of the material compulsion of history, which means that superstructure of society is bound to follow its understructure, that with a change in its understructure, its superstructure must also definitely change, and that without a change in its understructure no change is possible in its superstructure.

The Marxists claim that it is this principle which has rendered Marxist socialism scientific and gave it the form of a natural law, for according to this principle the implements of production, which are the most basic section of the economic structure of society continue to develop in accordance with certain natural laws in the same way as different species of plants and animals all over history have continued to develop gradually for millions of years and at particular junctures have transformed into new species. As the development and evolution of plants and animals has not been the result of the will or desire of anybody, same is the case with the development and evolution of the implements of production.

The implements of production in the course of their gradual development pass through several stages, and at every stage they bring about a compulsory and unavoidable change in all affairs of society. There is no possibility of any change in the social superstructure until and unless the implements of production reach a particular stage of their development. The efforts of those socialists and the advocates of a just order, who out of sheer emotionalism wish to socialize society and establish a just order without considering whether the development of the implements of production warrant such a change, are merely an exercise in futility. Karl Marx in his preface to the Capital says:

"The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future. .... And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement ultimately .... it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs."

In the last part of his statement Marx mentions a point to which either attention has not been paid or very little attention has been paid. In fact he wants to answer an implied question. Somebody may say: The phased development of society in the wake of regular and phased development of nature is compulsory and inevitable only so long as man does not discover the course of natural laws. As soon as he understands these laws, nature comes under his control and he becomes master of it. That is why it is said that so long as nature is not understood, it is master of man, but it becomes his servant in proportion to his understanding of it. Take the

case of an epidemic disease. So long as it is not known what causes it and how it can be eradicated, it rules supreme over man's life. But as soon as these things are known as they have been today, incidence of the disease is checked and there are no more any fatal cases. Same is the case with flood, storm etc.

In his statement Marx wants to assert that the regular and phased movements of society are of dynamical character. In other words they are automatic and from within like the regular movements of the growth of plants and animals, not mechanical changes brought about by outside factors, as are all technical and industrial changes. The eradication of pests by means of pesticides and the annihilation of disease germs by means of a medicine also belong to this category. In all those cases in which the discovery of a law of nature brings nature under man's control, the relation of the laws is mechanical. But in the case of dynamical and inner movement of the things the role of man's knowledge is nothing more than that man adapts himself to the course of the relevant laws and is benefited thereby. With the discovery of the laws regulating the growth and development of plants and animals including the growth of the foetus in the womb, man comes across a number of compulsory and inexorable laws to which he can do nothing but to submit.

Marx wants to say that social development of man which follows the development and evolution of the implements of production is a dynamical, inner and automatic self-development. Knowledge and consciousness cannot change it nor can they give it a form of their choice. Man is compelled to accept social development along a definite line and the stages through which it has to pass unquestioningly in the same way as he has to accept the development of a foetus along a definite line. He must put out of his head any idea of changing its course. Society cannot reach the final stage of its development without going through the middle stages, nor can it reach the final stage by any way other than the way fixed for it.

The Marxist view that the movement of social development is an automatic, unconscious, natural and compulsory movement, resembles the view held by Socrates about human mind and its natural creative capability. In his teachings Socrates used the method of objective questions. He believed that if graded questions were put in a regular manner and with accurate know ledge of the working of human mind, the human mind would automatically move to answer those questions. Human mind was in no need of any instructions from outside. The mother of Socrates was a midwife. He used to say that he did with the minds exactly what his mother did with the women in parturition. It is not a midwife who causes the delivery of a child. Delivery is caused at the right moment by mother's nature. Still the services of a midwife are required to makes it sure that nothing abnormal takes place, and no harm is done to the mother or the child.

Although from the view-point of Marxism, the discovery of the laws of sociology and history of philosophy can bring about no change in society, yet importance must be attached to these sciences. Scientific socialism is nothing but the discovery of the laws of sociology and history

of philosophy. At least they help in doing away with whimsical socialism and wishful thinking about setting up a just order. Though dynamical laws can change nothing, yet they have one good point about them and that point is that their effect is predictable. In the light of scientific sociology and scientific socialism the stage of the development of any society can be studied and its future can be foretold. It can be ascertained at what stage the baby of socialism is in the womb of a society and what can be exactly expected of it at each subsequent stage. Thus unnecessary and undue expectations can be avoided. As the immediate delivery of a four-month old foetus cannot be expected, similarly it is not possible that a society which is still at the feudal stage should suddenly be shifted to socialism.

Marxism tries to discover and describe the natural and dynamical stages of society and the compulsory laws of its development from one period to another.

From the view-point of Marxism on the whole societies have to pass through four stages to reach socialism. These stages are the periods of primitive socialism, slavery, capitalism and scientific socialism. Sometimes instead of four periods, five, six or seven periods are mentioned, for each of the periods of slave-holding, capitalism and socialism can be split into two periods.

III. Each historical period has its own distinguishing features and is different in its nature from other periods. From biological point of view when animals are transformed from one species into another species, they change their nature. The same is true of the historical periods. Each age has its own special laws and the laws of a previous or a subsequent age cannot be applied to it. Take the case of water. So long as it is water, the law peculiar to the liquids, apply to it, but as soon as it is changed into steam, it is no longer subject to those laws. Then it becomes subject to the laws of gases. Similarly so long as a society is at the stage of feudalism, it is governed by one set of laws. But as soon as it passes that stage and reaches the stage of capitalism, it will be absurd to try to retain the laws of the period of feudalism. As such society cannot have any eternal and everlasting laws. According to historical materialism, which believes that economy is the infrastructure of society, any claim to eternity on the part of any laws is totally unacceptable. This is one of those points of historical materialism which are inconsistent with religion, especially Islam which believes in an eternal code of law.

In the book, Revisionism from Marx to Mao, quotes from an appendix to the second edition of the Capital, the author says: "Every period of history has laws of its own... accordingly as life passes from one stage to another stage, it evolves and is governed by a new set of laws. Economic life, in the course of its historical development, brings forth a phenomenon that we come across in various branches of biology .... social organisms are distinguished from one another in the same way as animal and plant organisms are differentiated."

IV. It was due to the development of the implements of production that private property came

into being and society was divided into two classes of the exploiters and the exploited. From the dawn of history till today these two classes have been and still continue to be the main divisions of society. A conflict between them has always existed. Anyhow, this division does not mean that all groups of society are either exploiters or the exploited. Some of them may not belong to either of these two categories. What we mean to say is that these two are the categories effective in the destiny of society and form the chief divisions of it. All other groups of society follow one of these two main groups.

The author of the Revisionism from Marx to Mao writes:

"We find two different patterns of division of society according to classes and their conflicts; according to Marx and Engels: one is bipolar, and the other is multipolar. Definition of class also differs in both the patterns. In the first pattern it is an imaginary class, while in the other it is a real class. The rules regarding the divisions of classes are also different. Engels, in his preface to The Peasants' War in Germany tries to reconcile these two patterns by evolving a uniform standard for class division. He distinguishes various classes in society, and, within each class, he differentiates various subgroups. But according to his belief, there are only two classes who accomplish a definite historic mission: the bourgeois and the proletariat; because they form the really opposite poles of society."

As, according to the Marxist philosophy, it is impossible that the superstructure of society should go ahead of its infrastructure, similarly it is also impossible that the superstructure of society should remain intact when society, from the viewpoint of its infrastructure, that is its social and economic relations, is divided into two opposite classes of the exploiters and the exploited. In these circumstances social conscience is also divided into the conscience of the exploited and that of the exploiters and consequently two world conceptions, two ideologies, two moral systems and two kinds of philosophy appear. The social and economic position of each class inspires a separate way of thinking, a separate taste and adherence to separate ideas. Neither of the two classes can have a conscience, a taste or a way of thinking which is not in keeping with its economic position. The religion and the government are the things which are controlled exclusively by the class of the exploiters. These are the institutions which have been invented by this class with a view to perpetuate its control of the class exploited by it. As the class of the exploiters controls all the material resources of society, it imposes its culture including its religion on the exploited class. Thus the culture of the rulers, which includes their world conception, their ideology, their morality, their taste their feelings, and above all their religion, is the culture of the exploiters. As for the culture of the exploited it like themselves is always subdued and not allowed to grow and make progress. In German Ideology Marx has said: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal. . . . The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas, hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling

class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. In so far, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range; hence among other things they rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of epoch."

A ruling and exploiting class as such is reactionary, conservative, and conventional. It looks to the past. Its culture which is the ruling culture and which it imposes on its subjects is also reactionary, conventional and looking towards the past. As for the exploited and the subjugated class, it is revolutionary, iconoclastic, future-looking and progressive. Its subdued culture is also revolutionary and unconventional. To be exploited is a prerequisite of being revolutionary. In other words only an exploited class is capable of bringing about a revolution.

After reproducing the above-quoted passage from the preface to The war of German Peasants, the author of the Revisionism from Marx to Mao says: A year after the publication of this prefatory note, (prefatory note to The Peasants' War in Germany) the Congress of the German Socialists has written in its Gotha Program that all classes from a reactionary front against the labour class. Marx severely criticized this statement. But if we are logical, we should admit the fact that since these miserable socialists could not possibly differentiate between his bipolar or multi-polar patterns after what Marx had written in the Manifesto. In the Manifesto (Manifesto of the Communist Party), Marx presents the class conflicts of those days as the war between the proletariat and the bourgeois. He writes: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeois today, the proletariat alone is a revolutionary class."

Somewhere Marx has said that only the proletarian class fulfils all the conditions and has the characteristics necessary to become revolutionary. These conditions are as under:

i. to be exploited by producers;

ii. to be having no property (the peasants also have these two characteristics);

iii. to be organized, for which concentration at one place is necessary. (This characteristic applies to industrial workers only who work together in a factory etc. It does not exist in the case of the peasants who are always scattered in the various sectors of land.)

In respect of the second characteristic Marx has said: "A worker is free in two sense. He is free to sell his labour and he is not tied to any kind of property." In respect of the second characteristic Marx has said in his Manifesto: "Growth of industry has not only increased the number of the proletarians, but has also concentrated them in considerably large masses. The force of the proletarians is increasing and they are becoming aware of their power."

The above mentioned principle may be called the principle of conformity of the ideological

basis with class and social basis. According to this principle every class produces only that kind of ideas, moral principles, philosophy, art, poetry and literature which conforms with its way of life, its means of living and its interests. This principle may also be called the principle of the conformity of the urge of thinking with the direction of thinking. Every idea and doctrine and every moral or religious system that arises in a class, is always directed to the advantage of that class. No intellectual system arising in a particular class can be for the benefit of another class or for the good of the humanity at large. It is impossible that any idea or any system should have no class bias. Thinking can be humanistic and classless only if classes are abolished as the result of the development of implements of production. Only the negation of the contradiction of class basis can lead to the negation of the contradiction of ideological basis, and only the negation of the contradiction of intellectual drive can do away with the contradiction of intellectual orientation.

In some of his earlier works written in young age (Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right) Marx lays more stress on the political aspect of the classes (rulership and subjection) than on their economic aspects (exploitation and the exploited). He says that the class struggle aims at freedom and liberation from bondage. He is of the opinion that there are two stages of this struggle. The first stage is partial and political, and the other stage is universal and human. Marx says that the proletarian revolution, which is the last stage of the revolution of the bondmen of history is a basic revolution in the sense that it is for the complete emancipation of man and the total abolition of the system of rulership and subjection in all its forms. Explaining how a class in its social orientation can think of some thing that is far beyond its class position and how it can adopt an objective which is universal and humanistic as well as in conformity with the principles of historical materialism, Marx says: "As the bondage of this class is basic, revolution is also basic. It is injustice itself which has bee imposed on it. That is why it seeks justice itself and endeavour for the liberation of mankind."

This is a poetic and not a scientific statement. What meant by saying that "injustice itself has been imposed?" Has the exploiting class been doing injustice for the sake of injustice and not for the sake of exploitation and making gains, so that the proletarian class seeks justice itself? Furthermore, it is contrary to the conception of historical materialism and somewhat idealistic to suppose that the exploiting class has assumed its present attitude only during the capitalistic age.

As the principle of conformity of ideological basis with the class basis makes it necessary that there should be harmony between an ideology and the orientation which it causes, it a makes it necessary that there should be harmony between the inclinations of an individual and the ideas of his class. In other words every individual is naturally inclined towards the ideas the school that arises from his own class and whose orientation is to the advantage of his class.

Anyhow, the view-point of Marxist logic, this principle is extremely useful for the purpose of understanding the nature of ideologies and the inclination of the social classes.

V. The fifth conclusion is that such superstructural matters as ideology, guidance, propagation and exhortation etc. play only a limited role in giving direction to society or to social classes. Usually it is understood that ideology, preaching, arguments, teaching, training, propagation and advice can change the conscience of man and mould it in any desired way. But it is true that conscience is an involuntary reflection of class position, then the conscience of every individual, every group and every class is invariably and exclusively shaped by the social and class position of that individual, group and class, and it would be only an idealistic conception of society and history to think that the superstructural matters such as mentioned above can be a source of any social change. That is why it is said that intellectuality, as well as seeking reforms and staging revolutions have an aspect of autosuggestion. It is a sense of class deprivation, not any external factor such as teaching and training, that inspires people to seek reforms and to become revolutionaries. At least the real ground for these things is prepared by class position, and the role of ideology, guidance etc. is at the most confined to making the deprived class conscious of the class contradictions and its own position, or to turning a particular class into a class having a class consciousness. Thus in a class-dominated society the only intellectual basis that moves a class to action is its awareness of its position and its realization that it is being exploited. In the class dominated societies in which men have been divided into the two categories of the exploiters and the exploited, and in which social conscience has been split into two types, such basic human values as justice and love of humanity can have no role. Of course when as a result of the development of the implements of production a proletarian government will be established, classes will vanish and man will return to his true humanity having no class frontiers. Then his conscience will not be split by the system of private property and it will be possible that intellectual and human values reflecting the position of the development of the implements of production, play a definite role. From the view-point of historical periods, socialism is the superstructure of a particular age. It is not possible to introduce it at will in any age prior to it. (As some whimsical socialists wanted to do.) Similarly in an age in which society is divided into two classes, it is not possible to impose the special consciousness of one class on the other class. At present common human consciousness does not exist.

Therefore in a class dominated society a general and universal ideology having no class orientation cannot exist. Every ideology which appears in a class dominated society must invariably have a tinge of a particular class. Even if we suppose that there can be a general ideology having no class characteristic, it is certain that such an ideology practically will play no role. As such the mission of the religions and at least of the guidance, the counsel and the preaching of equality and justice to mankind in their name is at least eccentric, if not fraudulent.

VI. Another conclusion which we may draw is that the revolutionary leaders always come of the exploited class. It has already been proved that only this class is mentally prepared to seek reforms and stage a revolution. The only factors which bring about this preparedness are exploitation and deprivation. At the most there may be a need of some superstructural factors

to create consciousness of class contradictions. It is evident that the prominent individuals who create this awakening and self. consciousness in the exploited class should belong to this very class and have sympathy with its cause. They should be those members of this class who have already become self-conscious. As it is impossible that as regards time the superstructural position of a society should precede its infrastructural position, and it is impossible that the level of the social thinking of a class, should be higher than its social position, it is also impossible that a leader should make any demands which reflect some thing above the actual aspirations of his class. As such it is impossible that any member of the exploiting class should rise against his own class for the sake of the exploited class.

The author of the Revisionism from Marx to Mao says: "Another original contribution of The German Ideology is analysis of class consciousness. Here Marx, contrary to his earlier works, regards class consciousness as the product of the class itself; it does not come from outside. The real consciousness is nothing but an ideology, because it is bound to give generalized form to the interests of a particular class. But does not exclude the fact that this consciousness, which is based upon the awareness of its own conditions, strengthens the interests of the class. In any case, the class cannot attain maturity without producing its specific class consciousness.

Marx's view affirms the division of labour within the working class itself, i.e. the intellectual work (the ideological work, leadership) and manual work. Some individuals become thinkers or ideologues of the class, while others rather passively accept and act upon the ideas and concepts provided for them."

The same book analysing the views of Marx expressed in his Manifesto and in his Poverty of Philosophy says: "In this way, awakening class consciousness and organizing it in the form of a 'class-for-itself' is the task of the proletariat and also the result of its self-fuelled economic battle. This upheaval is neither brought about by any intellectual theory which is alien to the workers' movement, nor by any political party. Marx condemns Utopian socialists who despite their proletarian -inclination do not see the historical self-propulsion of the proletariat and their specific political movement . . . and try to replace with their fancies the gradual and self-motivated organization of the proletariat into a class."

This principle of self-development is of special importance in Marxist logic and may be regarded as a guiding principle with regard to knowing society, its social tendencies and the leanings of the individuals, especially of those who claim to be the leaders and reformers of society.

From the foregoing it is clear that Marx and Engels do not and cannot believe in an independent super-class of intellectuals. The principles of Marxism do not allow such a belief. If in some of his works Marx has expressed an opinion to the contrary, that may be on the occasions when he does not want to be a Marxist. We shall show later that such occasions are

not rare. Now the question rises how Marx and Engels explain their own position as intellectuals in the light of the Marxist principles. Neither of them belongs to the proletarian class. They are the philosophers and not the workers. Nevertheless, they have originated the greatest workers theory.

The answer of Marx to this question is note-worthy. The author of the Revisionism from Marx to Mao says: "Marx has spoken little about the intellectuals. He apparently does not regard them as a special stratum of society, but a part of certain other classes, particularly the bourgeois. In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx considers academics, journalists, university teachers, and lawyers as the part of the bourgeois class, like priests and army men. In the Manifesto, when he wants to mention the names of the theorists of the working class who by origin do not belong to it - like Engels and himself - he does not call them intellectuals, but regards them as 'groups of people from the ruling class. . ., who have embedded themselves amongst the proletariat,' and 'have brought many elements for the education and training of that class.'"

Marx does not explain how he and Engels slipped from the apogee of the ruling class and descended among the ruled, bringing with them valuable gifts for the education and training of this humble class described by the Quran as the **" downtrodden and the destitute"** (Vide Surah al Balad 90:17)

Really the good luck bestowed on Marx and Engels and through them on the down-trodden class of the proletariat never fell to the lot of Adam, the progenitor of the human race, who according to the religious traditions, descended from, the heaven to the earth! Adam did not bring with him any such gifts.

Marx does not explain how a theory of the liberation of the proletariat can develop in the very core of the ruling class nor does he say whether this descent was a speciality of these two individuals or was possible in the case of others also. Now when it has been established that the doors of the heaven and the earth can be opened to each others, although in a very special case, it is not clear whether there is a possibility of decent only, or the members of the lower classes can ascend to the position of the heavenly region. Anyhow, if they do ascend, they have not any suitable gifts to carry with them.

Basically it is absurd to carry any gifts from the earth the heaven. But if one succeeds in ascending to the heaven is not totally absorbed in the heavenly region, one is likely bring gifts on one's descent to the earth as Messrs. Marx and Engels did.

Criticism and Comments of Historical Materialism

As we have now explained the basis of the theory historical materialism and drawn certain conclusions from it, it is right time to make some comments on it.

Let us first make it clear that we do not propose to discuss critically the total views of Marx as expressed by him in all his works, nor do we intend to criticize Marxism as a whole. Here we propose to critically review only historical materialism, which is one of the fundamental principles of Marxism. Basically it is one thing to criticize the views of Marx or to criticize Marxism as a whole, and it is a different thing to criticize a particular principle of Marxism such as historical materialism.

A critical study of all the views of Marx as scattered in the numerous works compiled by him during the various periods of his life, shows many contradictions. Such a study has been undertaken by several individuals in the West. In Iran, as far as we know, the best book available on this subject is the Revision of views from Marx to Mao,[17] from which we have extensively quoted in this chapter.

The criticism of Marxism as a whole or any of its fundamental principles is unexceptionable even from the view point of the personality of Marx. The criticism of those principles, which are not considered to be final by Marx himself and about which he has expressed contradictory views, is also justified in those cases which are concomitant with the basic principles of Marxism and the contrary views expressed by Marx himself may be regarded as his deviation from Marxism. While dealing with historical materialism in this book, we have kept this principle in mind.

Here our criticism is based on the indisputable principles propounded by Marx, irrespective of the fact whether in his contradictory works and writings, he himself has or has not expressed any view to the contrary, for our main aim is to comment on historical materialism and not on the views of Marx.

It is an irony of history that in his philosophical, social and economic books Marx has more or, less supported the theory of historical materialism. But while analysing and interpreting the contemporary events he has paid little attention to the principles of this theory. Why so? Varied answers have been given to this question, and that is not a thing peculiar to this problem only. In many cases Marx has adopted a contradictory attitude, and has theoretically or practically deviated from Marxism. Therefore what is required is a general answer.

Some attribute this weakness to the immaturity of Marx during the early periods of his life. But this explanation is indefensible at least from the point of view of Marxism, for many of his theories, which are today regarded as the recognized principles of Marxism, are related to the periods of his youth or middle age, and many of his deviations, including some of his interpretations of the contemporary events, are related to the last period of his life.

Some others attribute this contradiction to his double personality. They assert that on the one hand he was a philosopher, an ideologue and the founder of a school. Hence it was natural for him to regard the principles enunciated by him as firm and final and to use all the force at his

disposal to reconcile between the actualities and his forethoughts. On the other hand Marx also had a learned personality and a scholarly spirit. This spirit compelled him to always submit to actualities and not to adhere to any definite principle.

Some others differentiate between Marx and Marxism. They claim that Marx and his ideas are only a stage of Marxism. Essentially Marxism is an evolutionary school, and hence there is nothing wrong if Marxism has gone ahead of Marx himself.

In other words, if the Marxism of Marx which is only an early stage of Marxism, is found to be defective, it is not fair to conclude that Marxism itself is faulty. Anyhow, these people do not explain what forms the main essence of communism. A school can be called evolutionary if all its preliminary principles are definite and firm. Only the subsidiary matters can be disputable. Otherwise there will be no difference between the abrogation of a theory and its evolution. If firm principles are not accepted as an essential condition of evolution, there is no reason why we should not begin with pre-Marx theorists and thinkers such as Hegel, Saint Simon, Proudhon or some other personality, should not call Hegelism or Proudhonism a school in the developing state, and regard Marxism as a stage of that school.

In our opinion the contradictions of Marx are due to the fact that he himself is a less Marxist than most of the other Marxists. It is said that once at a meeting of the Marxists, he defended a view contrary to his own earlier theory. His audience were very much upset. Marx said: " I am not as much a Marxist as you are" . It is also said that during the last days of his life he declared that he was not a Marxist at all.

Marx did not agree with certain views of Marxism because he was too clever to be a hundred per cent Marxist. To be a standard Marxist requires more than a little gullibility. Historical materialism, which is now under discussion, is a part of Marxism. It has certain principles which lead to certain results to which neither Marx the scholar could subscribe nor Marx the philosopher and thinker could adhere to these principles and results. Now here are our comments on historical materialism.

i) Baselessness: The first objection is that this view is not more than mere 'theory' without any proof. A historio-philosophical theory should either be based on contemporary historical evidence and then extended to other periods or should be based on historical evidence of the past events and extended to the present and the future; or should have valid scientific, logical or philosophical arguments to prove it.

The theory of historical materialism does not follow any of the above methods. The events of the time of Marx and Engels cannot be explained by it; so much so that Engels himself has admitted that he and Marx committed certain mistakes while dealing with the importance of economy in some of their books. But they could commit no such mistakes while analysing the contemporary events because at that time they were facing reality. Further, the events of the

past thousands of years also do not support the theory of historical materialism in any way.

(ii) Revision of Views by Its Founders: As we have repeatedly mentioned, Marx calls the economic basis of society its infrastructure and other bases its superstructure. This expression is enough to show that other bases of society are subordinate to its economic basis and depend on it. Furthermore, many of the statements of Marx quoted by us earlier make it clear that according to him this dependence is one-sided. It is economic factors alone which influence all other social matters.

It is a fact that even if Marx had not specifically stated so, his views regarding the precedence of matter to spirit, precedence of material needs to spiritual needs, precedence of psychology to sociology and the precedence of work to thought would have led us to the same conclusion.

Anyhow, in many of his writings Marx has expressed a different opinion in regard to the basis of dialectic logic. This may be regarded as a sort of a change in his views and to some extent a deviation from the absolute materiality of history. The opinion to which we refer is his theory of reciprocal influence. On the basis of this theory the causative relation should not be considered to be unilateral. If A is the cause of B and influences it, in its turn B is also a cause of A and influences it. According to this principle there exists a sort of reciprocal dependence and influence among all parts of nature and all parts of society.

At present we are not concerned as to whether this dialectic principle in the form in which it has been advanced is correct or not. But we must say that, according this principle, it is basically meaningless to speak of any precedence in the relationship between any two things whether they be matter and spirit, work and thought or economic basis of society and all other social institutions; for if each of the two things is dependent on the other and is essential for its existence, the question of precedence and being infrastructure does not arise.

In some of his statements Marx does not mention the influence of the infrastructure of society over its superstructure, but simply allots a role, whether essential or nonessential to the economic basis of society. Still in some other statements of his he speaks of the reciprocal influence of the infrastructure and the superstructure, but still maintains that the main and the final role is that of the infrastructure. While making a comparison between the two books of Marx, The Capital and The Critique of Political Economy the Revisionism from Marx to Mao says that in both of these books Marx describes economy as the determining factor. The book further says: " In spite of this, Marx, consciously or unconsciously, has added a new dimension to this definition by stating that superstructures, despite primacy of the base over infrastructure, can play an essential role in society."

The author further asks: What is the difference between the governing and determining role that is always performed by the economic infrastructures and this main role ascribed to the superstructures here? Even if the superstructures play the main role only occasionally, their

role must be determining in those cases in which it is played. Not only that, but in those cases what we call the infrastructure should be the superstructure and what we call the superstructure should be the infrastructure.

In a letter written by him towards the end of his life to Joseph Bloch, Engels remarked as under: " . . . . According to the materialist conception of history, ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real fife. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure: political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas, also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary."

Strangely enough, if the theory that the economic factor alone is the determining factor is a hollow fiction, it is amazing that this proposition has been advanced by none other than Marx himself. Moreover, if it is true that the so called superstructural factors in many cases seriously determine the form of historical struggle, then the economic factors are not the only determining factors. As such it is out of place to say that economic movement necessarily makes its way through an endless mass of contradictions.

What is more amazing is that in this very letter Monsieur Engels puts the responsibility for this mistake or, in his own words, distortion, partly on himself and Marx. He says:

"Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle vis-a-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into light."

But some other interpret, that too much emphasis laid by Marx and Engels on the economic factors, in a way different from what Engels has stated. They say that this excessive stress was not directed against the opponents of this theory, but was meant to disarm those rivals who supported it.

In The Critique of Political Economy Marx has laid more stress on the role of economic factors than in any other works of his. We have already reproduced a well-known extract from the preface of this book. Describing the circumstances in which this book was written,

the Revisionism from Marx To Mao says: " Another cause of writing the Critique of Political Economy, was the publication of a book by Proudhon, Manuel du speculateur a la Bourse, and another book by Darimon, the follower of Proudhon. . . . When Marx saw that his rivals in the camp of Proudhon from one side, and the followers of Lassalle from the other side were relying upon the economic element in a reformative (not revolutionary) way, he endeavoured to seize this weapon from their hands and used it for the purpose of revolution. This necessitated a rigidity suited to the purpose of popularizing his beliefs.

To meet the requirements of the special conditions of China and to justify the needs of his practical experience in leading the Chinese revolutionary movement, Mao so much changed the conceptions of historical materialism and the supreme importance of economy that nothing was left of them or of socialism based on historical materialism, except quibbling and play of words.

Under the heading, 'The Principal Contradiction and the Principal Aspect of Contradiction', Mao in his treatise on "Contradiction" says: "The principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and quality of a thing changes accordingly. In a certain process or at a certain stage in the development of a contradiction, the principal aspect is A and the non-principal aspect is B, at another stage of development or in another process of development, the roles are reversed - a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the strength with which each of the two aspects struggle against the other in the development of a thing."

Some people think that this is not the case with certain contradictions. For example in the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect;. . . in the contradiction between the economic foundation and its superstructure, the economic foundation is the principal aspect and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the view of mechanistic materialism. True, the productive forces, practice, and the economic foundation generally manifest themselves in the principal and decisive roles; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But under certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory, and superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role; this must also be admitted. When the productive forces cannot be developed unless the relations of production are changed, the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. As Lenin put it, without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. The creation and advocacy of the revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role. . . . When the superstructure (politics, culture and so on) hinders the development of economic foundation, political and cultural reforms become the principal and decisive' factors. By saying this, are we running counter to materialism? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the development of history as a whole it is the material essence of things that determines spiritual things, and social existence that determines social consciousness, at the same time we also recognize and must recognize the reaction of spiritual things and social consciousness on social existence, and the reaction of superstructure on economic foundation. This is not running counter to

materialism; this is precisely avoiding mechanistic materialism and firmly upholding dialectical materialism."

Actually what Mao says goes totally against the theory of historical materialism; when he says: "At the time that production relations impede the growth and development of productive forces" , or says: " At the time that revolutionary movement is in need of a revolutionary theory" , or says: " If the superstructure hampers the growth and development of infrastructure" he mentions what always happens and must always happen. But according to the theory of historical materialism such situations should never arise, for according to it the development of productive forces compulsorily changes the production relations; revolutionary theory invariably emerges automatically; and the superstructure compulsorily changes under the impact of infrastructure. Has not Marx in his preface to the Critique of Political Economy expressly said: " At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or what is but a legal expression for the same thing -- with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."

A change in the production relations prior to the development of the productive forces, the formation of a revolutionary theories prior to the automatic revolutionary insurgence and a change in the superstructure to pave the way for a corresponding change in the infrastructure, all this means the precedence Of thought to work, the precedence of spirit to matter and the importance and independence of political and intellectual basis of society as compared to its economic basis. Thus the idea of historical materialism is nullified.

Mao says that dialectic materialism would be violated, if it is hold that influence is only one-sided. That is true. But the problem is that scientific socialism is based on this very one-sided influence which is contrary to the dialectic principle of reciprocal dependence. Hence we have either to accept scientific socialism and to ignore dialectic logic or to accept dialectic logic and to ignore scientific socialism and historical materialism on which it is based.

Furthermore, what does Mao mean when he says that he admits that generally in the course of the development of history material essence of things determine spiritual things and social existence determines social consciousness. To admit that the main aspect of contradictions is subject to an occasional change, amounts to saying that sometimes the productive force determines the production relation and sometimes vice versa, i.e. the process is reversed. Sometimes a revolutionary creates a revolutionary theory and sometimes vice versa. Sometimes education, politics, religion, force etc. change the economic basis of society and sometimes the process is reversed. Therefore sometimes matter determines spirit and on some other occasion determines matter. Sometimes social existence determines social consciousness and sometimes social consciousness determines social existence.

In fact, what Mao has said about the change in the place of the main aspect of contradictions, is a Maoist theory which practically goes against the Marxist theory of historical materialism. It is not an interpretation of the Marxist theory as Mao claims. Mao has practically shown that like Marx himself he is also too clever to be always a Marxist. The Chinese Revolution led by Mao practically violated scientific socialism as well as historical materialism, and hence Marxism itself.

Under the leadership of Mao, China overthrew the old feudal system and set up a socialist regime instead of it, whereas according to scientific socialism and historical materialism a country passing through the stage of feudalism must pass over to the industrial and capitalistic stage first. It can step forward to socialism only when it has reached a high level of industrialization. As a foetus in the womb cannot reach a stage without passing through the earlier stage, similarly society cannot reach the final stage without passing through the earlier successive stage. But Mao has shown practically that he is a midwife who can bring to this world a four-month old foetus in a healthy, perfect and flawless condition. He has shown that contrary to what Marx has said, a leader may ignore what scientific socialism teaches, totally change the production relations and industrialize a country by means of party teachings, political formations, a revolutionary theory, and social information. These are the same things which are called by Marx a kind of consciousness and superstructure and not a kind of existence and infrastructure. According to Marx they are not basic. Mao has shown that productive relations can be overturned and a country can be industrialized, ignoring the so-called scientific socialism for all practical purposes.

In another way also Mao exploded the Marxist theory of history. According to the Marxist theory and at least from the personal point of view of Marx, the peasant class fulfils only the first two conditions of being a revolutionary class. It is an exploited class and it holds no property. But it does not fulfil the third condition of being concentrated, having mutual cooperation and mutual understanding and being conscious of its power. For this reason the peasant class is not fit to initiate a revolution. At the most in a semi-agricultural and semi-industrial society the peasants may become the followers of the revolutionary proletariat. Not only that, but from the point of view of Marx, the peasant class is basically mean and reactionary. It totally lacks every kind of revolutionary initiative. In a letter to Engels, on the revolution in Poland, Marx made this remark about the peasants: "The basically wretched and reactionary peasants should not be called upon to struggle." But Mao converted this very mean and reactionary class into a revolutionary class and with its help overthrew the old regime. According to Marx the peasants not only cannot lead a country to socialism, but they also can make no contribution in the shifting of a country from feudalism to capitalism. It is the bourgeois class which brings about a social revolution at a historical moment. But Mao jumped directly from feudalism to socialism with the help of the so-called reactionary class of the peasants. Therefore it was appropriate that in order to make a distinction between Maoism and Marxism, Mao should advance his own theory of a change in the place of the major aspect of contradictions. Anyhow, Mao himself does not speak of Maoism and he advances his views only as a learned interpretation of Marxism, historical materialism and scientific

socialism.

Mao learnt from his distinguished predecessor, Lenin, the lesson that a Marxist when necessary should practically secede from Marxism. It was Lenin who before Mao brought about a revolution in Russia at the time when that country was semi-cultural and semi-industrial. It was Lenin who for the first time founded a socialist State.

Lenin did not expect that during his lifetime Czarist Russia would ever be fully industrialized and turned into such a capitalist country where the exploitation of workers might reach its final so that automatically a self-conscious and dynamical movement could bring about a total change. So he felt that it would be too late if he waited for the period of pregnancy to be completed before he undertook the job of midwifery. Hence he started with the superstructure and used party, politics, a revolutionary theory, a war and force in order to convert the semi-industrialized Russia of that day into the Soviet Socialist country of today.

Lenin practically proved the truth of the famous proverb that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. He did not wait for the two birds of Marx and the automatic and dynamic readiness of the economic basis of the Russian society for insurrection. He fully exploited the one bird in hand and brought about a successful revolution by means of force, politics, party teachings and his own political insight.

(iii) Demolition of the Principle of Compulsory Harmony Between Infrastructure and Superstructure: According to the theory of historical materialism there should always be some sort of harmony between the infrastructure of a society and its superstructure, so that it may be possible to know the infrastructure by knowing the superstructure (by employing the deductive method, which provides semi-perfect knowledge) and to know the superstructure by knowing the infrastructure (by employing the inductive method, which provides perfect knowledge). If the infrastructure is changed, this harmony will naturally be destroyed, social equilibrium will be disturbed and such a crisis will begin that sooner or later it will ruin the superstructure. In contrast, so long as the infrastructure remains as it is, the superstructure will remain intact.

The contemporary historical events have proved the invalidity of the above proposition. Consequent to a number of political and social revolutions which accompanied the successive economic upheavals which occurred during the period from 1827 to 1847 Marx and Engels came to believe that social revolutions were an inevitable result of the economic crises. But according to the author of the Revisionism from Marx to Mao: "It is the irony of history that there has not been any economic crisis accompanied with a revolution in industrialized countries since 1848. In the very lifetime of Marx, before his death, four times forces of production rebelled against relations of production without bringing about any revolution ... later, some economists like Joseph Schumpeter have gone to the extent of naming, these crises caused by technical innovation as 'gales of creative destruction, and as safety valves for

reestablishing economic equilibrium and economic growth."

The countries like Britain, France, Germany and America have made stupendous industrial progress, They are at the zenith of capitalism. But contrary to the prediction of Marx that these countries would be the first to experience workers' revolution and would be converted into socialist countries, their so-called superstructure has gone under no change from political, legal or religious point of view. The child which Marx hoped to be born has completed nine months, has crossed not only nine but even ninety years, but still it has not seen the light of the day. Now no hope is left that this child will ever be born.

Of course there is no doubt that the present regimes in these countries will sooner or later be overthrown, but the awaited revolution of the workers will never come about and the Marxist theory of history will never prove correct. For that matter the regimes which are governing the so-called socialist countries of today will also be overthrown one day or other. Anyhow, it is certain that the future regimes in these countries will not be capitalistic.

We find that several countries in Eastern Europe, Asia and South America have reached the stage of socialism without passing through the phase of capitalism. Today there are countries which resemble each other from the point of view of their infrastructure, but still they differ widely as far as their superstructure is concerned. The two superpowers, that is America and Soviet Russia are the best example of this phenomenon. America and Japan have the same economic system, but their political, religious, moral, cultural and artistic systems different. On the other hand, there are countries whose political, religious and other superstructural systems are almost the same, but still their economic condition are totally similar. All this shows that the compulsory conformity of the superstructure of society with its infrastructure as conceived by historical materialism is merely a figment of imagination.

(iv) Nonconformity of the Basis of Class Ideology: As we have mentioned earlier, according to historical materialism superstructure of any period cannot go ahead of its infrastructure at all. As such the knowledge of every period is absolutely confined to that period. With the lapse of time it becomes old and obsolete, and is deposited in the archives of history. Ideas, philosophies, plans, predictions and religions, all are by-products of the special requirements of the age in which they appear and cannot be consistent with the requirements of any other age. But practically it has been proved otherwise. Not to say of creeds and religions, many philosophies, personalities, ideas and branches of knowledge appear to have been ahead of their times or their class. There are so many ideas which were produced by the material needs of a particular period, but though the times have since changed, the ideas still shine on the horizon of history.

It is amazing that in this case also Marx in some of his remarks has dissociated from Marxism. In his well-known book, the German Ideology he says: " Consciousness sometimes is seen to precede the contemporary empirical relations, to the extent that it is possible to find

the evidence for the conflicts of a later age in the writings of theoreticians of the preceding age."

(v) Independence of Cultural Development: According to historical materialism, like any other basis of society such as political, judicial and religious, its cultural and scientific basis also depends on its economic basis and cannot develop independently. Science develops only in the wake of the development of the implements of production and the development of the economic basis of society.

In fact, we know that implements of production, minus man, do not develop automatically. They develop as the result of man's contact with nature and his inquisitive efforts. Their growth and development is accompanied by man's own scientific and technical development. Now the question is which of these two things comes first; whether man first makes a discovery and then implements it to produce the relevant tools and instruments or first the tools come into existence and then man makes the relevant discovery? There is no doubt that the second alternative is correct.

It is obvious that scientific laws and technical principles are discovered in the course of man's inquisitive and experimental contact with nature. If man does not make an inquiry and does not undertake experiments, he cannot discover any scientific or natural law. There cannot be two opinions about that. The only question is whether after inquiry and experiment man first develops scientifically within himself and then creates technical implements or the case is the other way round? There is no doubt that the first alternative is correct.

Moreover, when the word, development is used in respect of man, it is used in its literal and real sense, but when it is used in respect of the technical and productive instruments and tools, it is used in its metaphorical sense. In its real sense development means evolution of a thing from a lower stage to a higher stage. But in the case of its use in its metaphorical sense, change is not in the stage of the same thing, but one thing disappears or is abolished and another thing takes its place.

When a child grows there is an actual development . But if a class teacher is changed and replaced by a better educated and more efficient teacher, of course there is a development in the teaching of the class, but this development is metaphorical only.

In the course of tool making the development of man is real. Man develops mentally in the actual sense. But the development of an industry, such as the development of motor industry which every year brings to the market an improved new model is only metaphorical, for in this case nothing has actually gone from a lower stage to a higher stage. The car of the last year has not been equipped in a better way but actually it has been discarded and replaced by other cars of better design and latest model.

In other words an imperfect unit has been cast away and replaced by a perfect unit. In this case the same unit has not shifted from a stage of imperfection to the stage of perfection. Obviously where there is a real development and a metaphorical development at the same time, the real development will be primary and the metaphorical development subsidiary.

Furthermore, this is the position in respect of technology. As far as other sciences like medicine, psychology, sociology, philosophy, logic and mathematics are concerned, this kind of one-sided dependence cannot be confirmed. The development of sciences depends on the economic position as much as or even less than the economic position depends on the development of sciences. Criticizing Marxism K. Schmoller says: "No doubt, the material and economic conditions are essential for the attainment of higher culture, but to the same extent it is also undoubtedly true that intellectual and moral development follows an independent course."

If we overlook this one fault in the doctrine of the French philosopher, August Comte that he sums up man's humanity in his 'mind', which is only a part of his capabilities and only one half of his human spirit, August Comte's theory about social development is more valuable than that of Marx. August Comte asserts: " Social phenomena are subject to a strict determinism which operates in the form of an inevitable evolution of human societies - an evolution which is itself governed by the progress of the human mind."

(vi) Historical Materialism Is Self-contradictory: According to historical materialism every idea, every view, every philosophical or scientific theory and every moral system, being a manifestation of special material and economic conditions, depends on the fulfillment of its own particular conditions and has no absolute value. Every idea, every theory and every moral system loses its validity with the passage of its time and a change in the material and economic conditions which made it inevitable. With a change of circumstances every idea and every theory must be replaced by a new idea or a new theory.

Obviously this universal law must also apply to the theory of historical materialism, propounded by some philosophers and sociologists. In case it does not, that would mean that there are some exceptions to this law and that there are some philosophical and scientific laws which operate independently and are not subject to any economic infrastructure. And if it is admitted that this law applies to the theory of historical materialism as well, the validity of this theory would be confined to only a particular period, that is the period during which it appeared, and it will have no value during any previous or subsequent period. Thus in each case this theory stands quashed.

If historical materialism as a philosophical theory does not apply to itself, it is self-contradictory, and if it applies to itself as well as to other theories, its validity is confined to a limited period. The same objection may be raised against dialectic-materialism also, according to which the principles of dynamism and magnetism apply to every thing including

the philosophical theories and scientific laws. We have dealt with this point in The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism, vol. I & II. All this shows how baseless is the claim that this world is a spectacle of dialectic materialism and society is a spectacle of historical materialism

The theory of historical materialism is amenable to other objections also, which we overlook for the present. It is really astonishing how such baseless and unscientific theory could become famous as a scientific theory ! Its reputation appears to be nothing but the outcome of a propaganda trick.

[17] This book was first written in French and then translated into Persian by Dr Anwar Khameh'i. He has exhibited profound wisdom in the treatment of the subject and praiseworthy capacity for evaluation and analysis of the problems involved. He himself has been once an ardent supporter and exponent of this school for many years.

Islam and Historical Materialism

Does Islam accept the theory of historical materialism? Are the Quranic analysis and interpretation of historical questions based on historical materialism? Some people think that they are, and maintain that at least one thousand years before Marx Islam based its analysis of history on this idea. Dr Ali al-Wardi, a Shi'ah scholar of Iraq who wrote several controversial books, including the one entitled Manzilat al-Aql al-Bashari (The Position of Human Intellect), is one of them. Perhaps he is the first person who originated this idea. Now among a certain section of Muslim writers it has gained popularity and it is regarded as a mark of being broad-mindedness and a fashion of the day to analyse history in Islamic phraseology from this point of view.

But from our point of view those who think on these lines either do not understand Islam or historical materialism or both. In view of the five basic points of historical materialism mentioned by us earlier and the six conclusions drawn from them, it is easy for those who are conversant enough with Islamic thinking to conclude that historical materialism and Islam's way of thinking are diametrically opposed to each other.

The material conception of society and history, especially if it is given the false colour of Islamic authenticity, is a great danger to Islamic teachings and Islamic culture. Therefore we think that it is necessary to study carefully the problems which have given or may give rise to the notion that Islam regards the infrastructure of society as economic and the nature of history as materialistic in essence.

It may be pointed out that in our study of the subject we have used more points than used by the supporters of this notion. They have based their arguments on two or three verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet, but we in order to make a full and comprehensive study, have included some other points also, which although not used by the supporters of this idea, may be adduced in its favour.

I. The Holy Quran has given various social conceptions to the world. In the course of our study of society we have counted about 50 terms having a social significance. A study of the social verses of the Quran and the use of these terms in them indicates that from the view-point of the Quran, societies consist of two diametrically opposite categories of people. The Quran from one angle suggests the existence of a bipolar state of society on the basis of material prosperity. It designates one pole as the Mala' (self-indulgent, ruling clique)

Mustakbirun (the arrogant, oppressors, tyrants, the immoderates and the voluptuaries), and the other Mustaz'afun (the under-privileged, oppressed and deprived), Nas (the masses) Zuriyya (the plebeians, ignoble, the means and insignificant- as opposed to Mala').[18] The Qur'an puts these two poles or these two categories opposite each other. From another angle the Quran envisages the bipolar state of society on the basis of spiritual and moral conceptions, and divides society into two distinct groups. The first group consists of the infidels, the polytheists, the hypocrites and the wicked, and the second group consists of the pious, the righteous, the reformers, and of those who fight for a sacred cause and those who lay down their lives for it.

If we carefully consider the meaning of the Quranic verses signifying the existence of these two material and two spiritual categories, we will find a sort of conformity between the first material and the first spiritual category and similarly between the second material and the second spiritual category. The infidels, the polytheists, the hypocrites and the wicked are the same people as the self-indulgents, the arrogants, the immoderates and the voluptuaries. They are none else. Similarly the Mu'minun (believers and faithful), the Muwahhidun (the monotheists), the Salihun (the righteous, virtuous) and the Mujahidun (the warriors and fighters for a sacred cause.) are none but the under-privileged, the poor, the helpless the servile, the oppressed and the deprived. Therefore on the whole, society has only two and not more than two poles or diametrically opposite categories. The first category comprises the opulent, the exploiters, the tyrants and the oppressors; who are the infidels and disbelievers. The second category is that of the oppressed and the underprivileged. It comprises the believers and the faithful. From this it is clear that it is the division of society into the oppressors and the oppressed, which brings into existence the two categories of the believers and the disbelievers. It is oppressiveness that begets infidelity, hypocrisy, wickedness and depravity; and it is the state of being oppressed that gives rise to faith, piety and righteousness.

To comprehend this equation clearly it is enough to study the Surah al-A'raf, 7:59 - 137. In these verses the stories of Prophets, like Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut, Shu'ayb and Musa have been briefly recounted. In all these stories, with the exception of the story of Lut, it may be observed that the class which joined with the Prophets was that of the underprivileged and the class which opposed them and resorted to disbelief was that of the arrogant and aristocratic gentry. This equation can have no explanation other than that of class conscience, the existence of which is essential and natural according to the theory of historical materialism. Therefore from the view-point of the Quran the confrontation between faith and infidelity is only a reflection of the confrontation between the oppressors and the oppressed.

The Quran expressly says that property, described by the Quran as 'riches', is the cause of oppression and arrogance, the qualities which are totally against the teachings of the prophets, who preach piety, modesty and peace. The Quran says: **"Remember that man is rebellious when he thinks himself independent and rich."** (Surah al-Alaq, 96:7)

In order to underline the evil effect of property the Quran has recounted the story of Qarun (Korah). He was an Israelite, not a Copt and belonged to the tribe of Prophet Musa. He was one of those underprivileged people whom Fir'awn (Pharaoh) considered to be inferior and of low cast. But as he acquired great amount of wealth, he misbehaved with his own people and looked down upon them. The Quran says: **"Qarun was a man from the people of Musa, but he oppressed them.** (Surah al-Qasas, 28: 76)

Does this not make it clear that the Prophets' opposition to oppression was in fact a confrontation with the property, the proprietors and the proprietorship? In some of its verses the Quran itself says expressly that the chief opponents of the Prophets were those who were deeply sunk in ease and luxury. In the following Quranic verse this point has been expressed as a general rule: **"We did not send to any township a warner, but its pampered ones declared: Lo! We are disbelievers in that which you brings to us."** (Surah as Saba 34:34)

All this shows that the mutual confrontation of the Prophets and their opponents and the mutual confrontation of faith and infidelity are a reflection of the confrontation of two social classes of the oppressed and the oppressors.

II. The Quran calls its addresses the 'Nas' or the masses, that is the underprivileged common people. That shows that the Quran believes in class conscience and thinks that only the downtrodden masses are fit to give ear to its call to Islam. That (also shows that Islam has a class bias. It is the religion of the weak and the underprivileged. Islamic ideology is addressed only to the masses suffering deprivation. That is another proof

of the fact that according to Islamic point of view economy is the infrastructure of society and the nature of history is material.

III The Qur'an declares that the leaders, the reformers, the martyrs and even the Prophets rise from among the masses, not from among the aristocratic and well to do class. In respect of the Prophet of Islam the Quran says: **"He it is who sent among the masses of people (people belonging to the ummah) a messenger of their own."** (Surah al Jumu'ah, 62:2)

These masses could be none other than the underprivileged masses. Similarly in respect of those who sacrifice their life for a right cause, the Quran says: **"We shall raise from every people a witness and then ask them to produce their proof."** Here also the word people refers to the deprived masses. It is because of the necessity of harmony between the ideological and social basis in the one hand and the economic and class basis on the other, that the leaders of all social movements and revolutions invariably rise from among the underprivileged masses. This necessity cannot be explained except on the basis of the materialist conception of history and the prime importance of economy.

IV. The nature of the movement conducted by the Prophets and their confrontation as

described in the Quran, is infrastructural, not superstructural. The object of the Prophets' mission has been to establish justice, fair play and social equality and to pull down the walls of class distinctions. The Prophets always paid their first attention to infrastructural matters and only subsequently turned to the superstructural matters such as doctrines, beliefs, and the reform of morals and behaviours, which have been their second objective.

The Holy Prophet said: "He who has not the means of living, cannot prosper in the Life Hereafter".

In other words there can be no spiritual life without a material life. This maxim leads to the conclusion that the material life has precedence to the spiritual life and that the spiritual life is the superstructure and the material life the infrastructure of society. Similarly the Holy Prophet has also said: "0 Allah! Bless our bread with abundance; for had there been no bread, we would have given no alms, nor would we have offered our prayers."

This saying of the Holy Prophet also leads us to believe that spirituality depends on materiality.

It is absolutely wrong to say, as most of the people now think, that the activities of the Prophets were confined to the superstructural matters, that they were keen only to reform people and improve their moral conduct, and had nothing to do with infrastructural matters or at the most attached a secondary importance to them. It is also wrong to say that the Prophets thought that when the people should embrace faith, everything would be all right automatically, justice and equality would be established and the exploiters would of their own accord restore the rights of the underprivileged to them. In short most of the people have the wrong notion that the Prophets pushed forward their objectives with the weapon of faith and therefore, their followers also should go along the same path. This idea has been fraudulently invented by the exploiting class of the religious leaders in order to make the teachings of the Prophets ineffective and has been imposed on other people in such a way that it has been accepted almost unanimously. In the words of Marx, those who issue material goods to society, issue intellectual goods also to it. As a matter of fact those who are the material rulers of society are its spiritual rulers also and control its thinking.

The working method of the Prophets was contrary to what most of the people believe now. The Prophets first delivered society from social polytheism, social discrimination, tyranny and behavioral polytheism. They only later paid attention to the belief in monotheism and practical piety.

V. The Quran mentions the arguments adduced by the opponents of the Prophets all over history along with the arguments of the Prophets and their followers. The Quran clearly points out that the logic of the opponents has always been that of conservatism, conventionalism, and looking to the past, whereas the logic of the Prophets and their followers has been

unconventionalism and looking towards the future. The Quran makes it clear that from sociological point of view the opponents of the Prophets used the same arguments which in a society divided into the exploiters and the exploited were usually used by the class of the exploiters. On the other hand the Prophets and their followers used those arguments which had throughout history been used by the sufferers and the deprived.

The Quran carefully recounts the for and against arguments of the opponents and the supporters of the Prophets and shows what kind of logic they had. Like these two groups their two sets of arguments have existed side by side all over history. The Quran has recounted these arguments in order to set a standard by which the theories of even today may be adjudged. In the Quran there are many scenes where the arguments of the Prophets and their opponents stand side by side with each other.[19] As an example we quote here some Qur'anic verses with short explanation of them:

" And they say: If Allah had so willed, we would not have worshipped the angels. (As we now do, and our worship of the angels means that Allah has willed so. Doctrine of predestination.) **They have no knowledge whatsoever of that.** (Of what they say about predestination. What they say is not based on any logical argument.) **They do nothing but guess. Did We give them any Scripture before the Quran, so that they were holding fast thereto?** (There is no such thing. They have no revealed Book to support their idea of predestination.) **In fact they say only: We found our fathers following a way, and we are guided by their footprints. And even so we did not send a warner before you (Holy Prophet) to any township, but its luxurious ones said: Surely we found our fathers following a way and we are following their footprints. The Prophet said to them: Even though I bring you better guidance than that you found your fathers following?** (And you know for certain that logically the guidance I have brought is better, but you stiff follow in the footsteps of your fathers.) **They answered: In any case we reject what you have brought."** (Surah al Zukhruf, 43:20-24)

We see that the opponents of the Prophets often use the argument of predetermination and fatalism. As sociology points out, this is the logic of the beneficiaries of the existing situation, who want to maintain the status quo, and use predetermination as a pretext to prevent any change. They often use the practice of their forefathers as a plea to justify their action and describe the past as sacred and worth following. To them it is enough to prove the propriety and validity of a thing that it has some connection with the past. This is nothing but the logic of the conservatives and the beneficiaries of the existing situation.

In contrast, the Prophets instead of supporting predetermination and conventionalism, advocate that which is more logical, more scientific and more beneficial. That is the logic of the revolutionaries who have suffered under the existing situation. When their opponents lose in their arguments against the Prophets, the last thing they say is: Whether predetermination is or is not a valid theory and whether conventional practice is or is not to be respected, we are against your message, your mission and your ideology, because your message is against our

existing social and class interests.

VI. Most significant is the Quran's orientation in the conflict between the underprivileged and the arrogant. Just as historical materialism predicts on the basis of its dialectic logic, the Quran also believes that in this conflict the final victory must be of the underprivileged. In this connection the Quran underlines the inevitable direction of the course of history, and points out that the class which possesses the quality of being revolutionary invariably gains victory in its persistent conflict with the class which by its nature has the quality of being reactionary and conservative and that the former succeeds the latter in the possession of the land.

The Quran says: **"We desire to show favour to those who are oppressed in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them inheritors."** (Surah al-Qasas, 28:5)

Similarly in the following verse it says: **"We caused those people who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which we had blessed. And the fair word of the Lord was fulfilled for the children of Isra`il because of their endurance; and We annihilated all that Fir'awn and his people had done and that which they had contrived."** (Surah al A'raf 7:137)

The view of the Quran that history advances towards the victory of the oppressed and the exploited, is in complete agreement with the rule we inferred earlier from the theory of historical materialism to the effect that reactionism and conservatism were the characteristics of exploitation. This quality being against the law of evolution, exploitation is bound to vanish sooner or later. It will not be out of place here to cite with some comments a part of an article published recently and written by some intellectuals who have passed from intellectualism to Marxism. The last quoted verse of the Quran has been used as the heading of this article. Under this heading the article says:

"What is more interesting is the support given by Allah and all the phenomena of the world to those who are despised. There is no doubt that according to the Quranic way of thinking these despised ones are the subjugated and oppressed masses who have no say in determining their destiny. In view of this position of the masses and the support given to them by Allah, who wills to favour them, the question arises: Who are the people who carry out this Will of Allah? The answer is evident.

When it has been admitted that society has been so organized that it is divided into the two opposite classes of the oppressors and the oppressed and it is also known that it is the Will of Allah that ultimately the oppressed should inherit the land and be its leaders and the oppressors should perish, it becomes clear that the Will of Allah is to be implemented by the oppressed themselves under the leaders and the intellectuals who rise from among themselves.

In other words, it is the Prophets and the martyrs from among the oppressed class who take the first steps to fight against the tyrannical and oppressive system, and pave the way for the establishment of the leadership and the supremacy of the oppressed. This whole idea is actually a reflection of what we know about the Quran's conception of religious revolutions and historical changes. As, from social point of view, monotheists' revolutions revolve round the leadership of the oppressed and their inheritance of the land, the leaders and the pioneers of their movement must rise from among themselves and their social ideology must be their own."

The above thesis comprises several points.

i. From the point of view of the Quran society is bi-polar and has always been divided into the two opposite classes of the oppressors and the oppressed.

ii. The Will of Allah (or in the words of the above cited article the support given by Allah and all the phenomena) is directed to the establishment of the leadership and inheritance of the oppressed as a universal rule. In this respect there is no difference between the faithful and the infidels or between the monotheists and the polytheists. The above quoted verse lays down a general and universal rule. Allah always grants victory to the oppressed as such against the oppressors. In other words all over history there has always been a conflict mainly between the oppressed and the oppressors and the law of evolution requires that the former gain a victory against the latter.

iii. In society Allah's will is realized through the oppressed themselves. The leaders, the pioneers, the Prophets and the martyrs rise from among the oppressed class, not from among any other class.

iv. There is always a sort of harmony between the intellectual and social basis of society on the one hand and the class basis in the other.

Thus we see how from the above quoted Quranic verse several Marxist principles about history have been derived, and how the Quran has been made to reproduce the philosophy of Marx 1,200 years before Marx was born.

As this idea about history has been allegedly derived from the Quran, let us see what conclusions are drawn from its application to contemporary history. The gentlemen who have derived this so-called Quranic idea, have immediately and without any delay applied it as a test case to the analysis of the present religious movement. They say that the Quran tells them that the leaders of any revolutionary movement must necessarily rise from among the oppressed. But today it is observed that the divines who constitute one of the three dimensions of the system that corrupts history, have become revolutionaries. So how to solve this anomaly?

According to these intellectuals the answer is simple. There can be no doubt that there is a conspiracy. As the rulers felt that their existence was in danger, they in order to save their skin ordered the divines depending on them to play the role of the revolutionaries. This is the conclusion that is drawn from this Marxist idea (excuse me, the Qur'anic idea). It is obvious to whose advantage such conclusions are drawn.

Comments

What has been said to justify the theory of historical materialism from the view-point of the Quran is either totally incorrect or is correct in itself but the conclusion drawn from it is wrong. Now let us study the foregoing arguments.

First, it is absolutely false to say that the Quran has divided society into two mutually opposite material categories and two mutually opposite spiritual categories and these two divisions correspond with each other. In other words, it is wrong to say that from the Quranic point of view the infidels, the pagans, the hypocrites, the wicked and the corrupt are the same as the aristocrats, the arrogants and the tyrants, and similarly the faithful, the monotheists and the martyrs are the same as the oppressed and the underprivileged. It is a lie to assert that the confrontation of the infidels with the faithful is a reflection of the confrontation of the oppressors with the oppressed. Such a correspondence cannot be inferred from the Quran, at all. In contrast what can be inferred from the Quran is quite contrary to that.

In its lessons of history the Quran shows that there have been believers who rose from the arrogant and aristocratic class itself and they fought against their own class and its values. The 'believer of Fir'awn's family' whose story is related in one of the chapters of the Quran by this very name, is an example. The Quran has also mentioned Fir'awn's wife who was his life-partner and enjoyed all the privileges and comforts enjoyed by Fir'awn himself, but, still she was a believer.

The Quran has related the striking story of Fir'awn's magicians. This story shows how man's natural instinct of seeking truth revolts against falsehood and fraud, spurning all his personal interests. These magicians were not frightened by Fir'awn's threat that they would be hanged and their hands and feet would be cut off from alternate sides.

According to this story as related by the Quran the uprising of Prophet Musa is basically an uprising that demolishes the theory of the materiality of history. It is true that Prophet Musa was an Israelite, not a Copt. He did not belong to Firawn's family. But from his early childhood he was brought up in Fir'awn's palace like a prince. Still he revolted against the Fir'awnic system in the midst of which he himself lived and of which he was a beneficiary. He left Firawn's palace and preferred to be a shepherd of the old man of Madyan. He was later raised to Prophethood and then he formally came into collision with Fir'awn.

The Holy Prophet of Islam was an orphan in his childhood and a poor man till his early youth. He was well-off only following his marriage with Khadijah. Referring to this point the Quran says: **"Did He not find you an orphan and protect you? Did He not find you needy and suffice you?"** (Surah az-Zuha, 93:6,8)

According to the principles of historical materialism, during the period when the Holy Prophet was well-off, he should have changed into a conservative justifying the status quo. But it was during this very period that his revolutionary mission began, and he revolted against the capitalists, the usurpers and the slave-owners of Makkah and fought against idol-worship, a symbol of that way of life.

It is not true that all the believers, the monotheists and the monotheistic revolutionaries belonged to the under-privileged class. From the class of the oppressors also those whose nature was unspoiled or less spoiled and persuaded them to revolt against themselves (repentance) or against their class (revolution). Similarly the whole oppressed class was not with the believers, nor were all the oppressed the monotheistic revolutionaries. Therefore it is clear that neither all the believers belong to the oppressed class nor all the oppressed have been the believers. It is absurd to claim that these two categories correspond with each other. However, it is true that most of the followers of the Prophet belonged to the oppressed class or at least to the class whose hands were not polluted with oppression. Similarly most of the opponents of the Prophets were oppressors.

Though the human nature which prepares the ground for the acceptance of the Divine message is common to all human beings, yet the aristocratic oppressors living in luxury and ease become so accustomed to their existing position that their way of life becomes a great hindrance in their way. To be able to accept truth it is necessary for them to free themselves from the polluting effect of wealth and power, but very few succeed in doing that. In contrast the oppressed class does not have any such impediment in its way. Its members by accepting truth, not only respond to the call of their true human nature but by doing so they regain their lost rights also. For them to join the group of the believers is a good augury as well as a good entertainment. However it is correct that the majority of the followers of the Prophets come from the oppressed class and only a minority from other classes. But the question of alleged correspondence is absolutely absurd.

The Quranic conception of the nature of history is different from what the principles of historical materialism say. From the view-point of the Quran, spirit is basic and matter can in no way have precedence to it. Spiritual needs and spiritual urges exist in man quite independent of his material needs and do not depend on them. Thought is as basic as work. The psychic personality of man is far more important than his social personality. The Quran believes in the basicity of real human nature and holds that within every man, even within a distorted man like Fir'awn, there exists a natural man, this natural man may be in a captive state. The Quran is of the opinion that there always a possibility even for the most distorted man to move the right direction and accept the truth, though this possibility may be very

slight. That is why the Prophets have orders to exhort the tyrants in the first instance by means of advice and counselling to change their ways and call on their natural personality to revolt against their filthy social personality. In many cases such efforts have been crowned with success. This success is called repentance (tawbah).

At the first stage of his mission Prophet Musa was ordered to go to Fir'awn and try to awaken his dormant human nature. He was to fight against Fir'awn only in the case of his failure in this attempt. From Musa's point of view Fir'awn was keeping a natural man prisoner inside himself as he was confining many people outside. In the first instance Musa went to Fir'awn to instigate his inner prisoner, that is natural Fir'awn or whatever was left of him, to revolt against the social Firawn or the Fir'awn as he had been made in society. Allah says to Prophet Musa: **"Go to Firawn, for he has rebelled, and say to him: Are you interested in reforming yourself.? (If you are), I will guide you to your Lord, so that you may have a fear of Him."** (Surah al-Nazi'at, 79:17-19)

For the purpose of guidance the Qur'an believes in the value and effectiveness of preaching, reminding, counselling and logical arguments (in the words of the Quran itself: wisdom). From the view-point of the Quran these things can reform man, change the course of his life, transform his personality and bring about a spiritual revolution in him. The Quran does not believe that the role of ideology is limited, whereas according to Marxism and Materialism the role of guidance is confined to making people conscious of class contradictions only.

Secondly, it is also wrong to assert that the Quran is addressed to the common people who are the same as the under-privileged masses and that, as such, the message of Islam is addressed to the oppressed class only, or that the ideology of Islam is that of the oppressed and Islam gets its followers and soldiers exclusively from among the oppressed masses. Actually the addressees of Islam are 'nas' which mean men in general.

No dictionary gives the meaning of 'nas' as the oppressed masses, nor is this word used by the Arabs in that sense. In fact this word has no class significance. The Quran says: **"It is obligatory on the 'nas' (people) to go on a pilgrimage of the House (of Allah); (this is for) those who can afford it."** (Surah Ale Imran 3:97)

Can the word 'nas' in this verse signify the oppressed masses? The Quran in many places has used the phrase, 'Ya ayyuhannas' vocatively. No where this expression refers to the underprivileged masses. It has always been used to address the men in general. The generality of the address of the Quran springs from the theory of true human nature as mentioned in the Quran.

Thirdly, it has been claimed that the Quran has stated that all leaders, pioneers and martyrs rise exclusively from among the oppressed masses. This is also a wrong assertion.

It is ridiculous to claim on the basis of the Surah al Jumu'ah, verse 2 that the Holy Prophet rose from among the ummah and that ummah signifies the masses of people. The word used in the verse is ummiyyin, a plural of ummi, which means unlettered. This word is an adjective from 'umm' and not from "ummah" . Furthermore, even the word ummah means society consisting of multifarious groups, frequently mutually incongruous. It does not mean masses at all. Even more ridiculous is to cite the following verse as an argument. It has been wrongly interpreted (rather distorted) to mean: **"We rouse from every ummah (mass of people) a martyr, (revolutionary). Then ask each one of the ummahs to produce their proof, (the revolutionary killed in the way of Allah.)** " (Surah al Qasas, 28:75)

Firstly, this verse follows another verse. Both the verses are interconnected and refer to the events of the Day of Resurrection. The preceding verse is this: **"The day Allah will call the pagans and say: Where are my partners you alleged (that they existed)?"**

Secondly: The word, "naza'na" in the verse means 'We take away', and not 'We rouse'.

Thirdly: the word 'Shahid' in this verse does not mean martyr. It means a witness. According to the Quran every Prophet is a witness of the deeds of his community. In the Quran not a single instance can be found in which the word Shahid has been used in the sense of martyr as it is generally used today. Anyhow, in the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the Imams it has been used in this sense. But not in the Quran in any case. From the above it is clear how the verses of the Quran are misinterpreted to justify a stray notion of Marx.

Fourthly, we must know the objective of the Prophets. Is their first and main objective to establish justice and fairplay or establish a bond of faith and spiritual knowledge between man and Allah or to establish both of them? In other words, are the Prophets dualists as regards to their objective or is there any other possibility also? We have already dealt with this point while discussing the topic of Prophethood and hence need not repeat here what we have already said. Here we confine ourselves to an inquiry into the method used by the Prophets to achieve their objective. As we pointed out while dealing with practical monotheism, the Prophets neither concentrate all their efforts on freeing man from within and severing his relation with other things as the mystics claim, nor on improving and modifying his outside relations as some other schools of thought assert. The Quran in a concise form says:

" Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah and that we shall ascribe no partner to Him and that none of us shall take others for Lord beside Allah." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:64)

Now the question is whether the work of the Prophets begins from within or from without.

Do the Prophets first undertake to bring about an inner revolution by creating faith and

spiritual zeal and then rouse those who have been intellectually and emotionally prepared to establish social monotheism, social reform and social justice. Or do the Prophets first pay attention to the questions of social injustice and rouse the people to do away with social polytheism and social discrimination and only subsequently work for the inculcation of faith and doctrinal and moral virtues.

A little study of the method of the Prophets shows that unlike the reformers, the Prophets and the Imams (Divine Guides) begin with the inculcation of faith, belief and spiritual earnestness and reminding the people of the beginning and the end of human race. A study of the order in which the surahs (chapters) and the verses of the Quran were revealed and a study of the questions to which the Holy Prophet paid attention during his 13-year mission at Makkah and 10-year mission at Madina respectively, will throw ample light on this subject.

Fifthly, it is but natural that the opponents of the Prophets generally had a conservative outlook. But it cannot be inferred from the Quran that all of them without any exception had such an outlook, or that all of them belonged to the well-to-do class of the exploiters. All that can be inferred from the Quran is that conservatism was the logic of the leaders of the opponents. They no doubt were aristocratic arrogants and in the words of Marx, being the masters of the material goods of society, issued to others the intellectual goods also. It is also but natural that the logic of the Prophets was that of dynamism, reason and indifference to the old customs and usages. But their way of thinking was not an inevitable result and reflection of any sense of their being underprivileged and deprived of their rights, but was due to the fact that they were perfect human beings and their reasoning and sentiments were fully mature. We will show later that as man attains maturity in his humanity, his dependence on his natural environment, social atmosphere and material conditions is reduced and he becomes independent of them. The Prophets' independent way of thinking made it necessary for them that they should not be tied to old customs and traditions and should deliver others also from their blind observance.

Sixthly, what has been said about the 5th verse of the Surah al-Qasas is also not acceptable, because some other verses of the Quran describe the destiny of history differently, and incidentally throw light on the evolution of history. Even if it is presumed that this verse signifies exactly what has been stated, it is further explained and qualified by some other verses. Further, basically this verse does not lay down any universal rule, and as such, it is not necessary to explain or qualify it while comparing it to other verses. Actually this verse is closely connected with a preceding and a following verse and if all the three verses are considered together, it becomes quite clear that in this verse no universal rule has been mentioned as has been argued. We deem it convenient to consider this verse in two parts. In the first part we will consider it apart from the verses preceding and following it on the presumption that it independently lays down a universal rule of history. Then we will compare it to other verses from which some contrary rule of history can be derived, and see what can be inferred from all the verses put together. In the second part it will be shown that basically this verse does not mention any rule of history as has been claimed.

First part: In several of its verses the Quran refers to the evolutionary course of history, and says that the destiny of history is the final victory of faith over infidelity, of piety over licentiousness, of virtue over corruption and of good deeds over bad deeds. In the following verse we read:

"Allah has promised such of you as believe and do good deeds that He will surely make them succeed (the existing rulers) in the earth as He made those who were before them succeed (others); and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear. They worship Me and ascribe nothing as partner to Me." (Surah an Nur, 24:55)

In this verse a promise of a final victory and succession in the earth has been made to the virtuous believers. Unlike the verse of the Surah al-Qasas, in this verse the emphasis is on ideological and moral virtues instead of on being oppressed. In fact it has been declared that the final victory will be that of a particular sort of belief and a particular sort of conduct. In other words, the final victory will be of the man who is faithful, upright and virtuous. In the final victory three things have been promised. The first is the succession which means the attainment of power by the faithful and the final defeat of those holding it at that time. The second is the materialization of such moral and social values, as justice, chastity, piety, boldness, self-sacrifice, love, adoration, earnestness and self-purification. The third thing promised is the negation of every kind of polytheism, whether connected with worship or obedience.

The Holy Qur'an says: **"And Musa said to his people: Pray to Allah for help and be patient. The earth belongs to Allah. He gives it to those of His slaves whom He will. Happy shall be the end of the pious."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:128)

"We have written in the Psalms once more that My righteous slaves will inherit the earth." (Surah al-Ambiya 21:105)

There are some other verses also on the subject.

Now what to do? Should we take as an authority the verse of succession of (Surah an Nur) or the verse of oppression of (Surah al Qasas)? Can it be said that although the significance of these two verses is apparently different, they still describe the same truth, because the believers and the pious are the same as the oppressed, for the state of being oppressed is their social and class symbol and faith and piety are their ideological symbols? Of course not!

In the foregoing we have proved that the theory that the so-called superstructural terms of faith, virtue and piety are analogous to the terms of being oppressed and being underprivileged, is not correct from the view-point of the Quran. From its point of view it is

possible that some groups be believers, but not oppressed. It is also possible that some other groups be oppressed but not believers. The Quran has mentioned these two categories separately. Anyhow, as we have pointed out earlier, when in a class-dominated society an ideology based on the Divine values of justice, self-sacrifice and charity is introduced, naturally the oppressed form the majority of those who accept it, because they do not have to face the inhibition existing in the nature of other classes. But still that does not mean that all believers belong to the class of the oppressed.

Secondly each of these two verses shows a different mechanism of history. The verse of the surah al-Qasas describes the course of history as a class war in which the spirit of the oppressors is always reactionary and that of the oppressed by its very nature is revolutionary. This struggle as a rule culminates in the victory of the oppressed, whether they have or have not the qualities of faith and good deeds in the Quranic sense. For example, the term oppressed covers all the exploited people including such people as those of Vietnam, Campochia etc. We may say that this verse defends the rights of all the oppressed, and indicates the principle of Divine justice: **"Deem not that Allah is unaware of what the oppressors do."** (Surah Ibrahim, 14:42)

All the cases in which the oppressed have been granted or will be granted leadership and inheritance of land, are manifestations of Divine justice.

I

As for the verse relating to Istikhlaf (succession, 24:55) and other similar verses, expound a different mechanism operating in history as a natural process. The rule that represents this mechanism is broader in its scope than the rule of Divine justice, although it covers the principle of Divine justice also.

According to the mechanism to which this and some other verses refer, side by side with many kinds of struggles motivated by material gains which go on in this world, there always exists a struggle which is not motivated by material gains. It is conducted purely for the sake of Allah, and has always been led by the Prophets and after them by their faithful followers. It is this struggle alone that has pushed humanity forward in the field of human culture, and can rightly be called a struggle between truth and falsehood. It has pushed history forward from the view-point of humanity and human spirituality. The main motivating force of this struggle has never been the pressure of a different class. It is motivated by man's natural tendency towards truth and justice, towards acquiring the knowledge of the system of existence and towards building society as it should be.

It is not a sense of deprivation which has pushed man forward, but it is his natural and instinctive desire to attain perfection that has induced him to make progress.

Man's animal capabilities have remained unchanged from the beginning of history. They have neither developed in any way nor can they develop any further, but his human capabilities have continued to unfold themselves gradually. In future more than today man is expected to free himself from his material and economic limits and incline more and more towards faith and belief. Material, economic and class struggles have not pushed history forward. It is ideological, doctrinal and godly struggles which have pushed it. This is the natural mechanism of man's evolution and this is what is meant by the final victory of those who perform good deeds, show moral rectitude and fight for the right cause.

The Divine aspect of this victory lies in its being a manifestation of Allah's mercy and His fostering care which require the evolution of all existing things, whereas Divine justice simply necessitates compensation. This Divine aspect has been developing over history and will reach its final stages at the end of it. In other words, the good news which has been given in the Quran is about the appearance of the mercy and fostering care of Allah and not merely about the emergence of the Divine power and of retribution.

Thus, we see that each one of the above mentioned two verses (and similar other verses) has its own specific logic. One of them speaks of the class which attains victory and the other of the course which history must traverse to reach the stage of that victory. One of these two verses describes the mechanism which moves history, and the other refers to that Divine aspect of history, which is a manifestation of Allah's attributes. Each one of these two verses has a special logic of its own. Nevertheless it also has become clear that the verse 55 of the Surah an-Nur is more comprehensive as regards to its results than the verse 5 of the Surah al-Qasas. What man gets according to the latter is only a part of what he gets according to the former. The Surah al-Qasas shows only that Allah helps the oppressed, whereas the Surah an-Nur speaks of several other favours which He bestows on the believers.

Second Part: As for the second part of the discussion, it is a fact that the verse 5 of the Surah al-Qasas does not lay down any universal rule. Consequently it neither explains the course of history nor does it refer to any mechanism of it. It does not say that the oppressed will be victorious just because they are oppressed. The wrong impression that this verse mentions a universal rule is due to the fact that this verse which is interconnected with a preceding and a following verse, has been pulled out of its context. Further, the relative pronoun 'allazina' in the verse has been taken to mean 'all those', and thus a rule has been derived from it. Let us consider all the three verses together:

"Surely Fir'awn exalted himself in the land and divided its people into groups. A group among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. He was one of those who created corruption. And We desired to show favour to those who were oppressed in the land to make them the leaders and the inheritors; and to establish them in the land, and to show Fir'awn and Haman and their hosts which they feared from them." (Surah al-Qasas, 28:4-6)

These three verses are interlinked and all of them put together relate one story. All the three verses are joined by conjunctions, and hence they cannot be separated from each other. Moreover, as the third verse describes the fate of Fir'awn, whose arrogance is mentioned in the first verse, it serves to complete the first verse and cannot be detached from it.

Had the third verse not existed or had Fir'awn's fate not been mentioned in it, it would have been possible to separate the second verse from the first and regard the second verse as an independent statement of a general rule. But the inseparable link between these three verses precludes such a possibility. In their present form these verses signify that Fir'awn exalted himself, divided his subjects and oppressed a section of them. Allah willed to favour those who were despised, oppressed and suppressed by him and made them the leaders and the inheritors. Therefore the relative pronoun in the second verse refers to only a particular people, not all the people in general.

There is another point. The verse says: **"We desire to favour them and to make them the leaders."** It does not say: "We desire to favour them with making them the leaders." In other words there are two independent sentences joined with a conjunction. Hence the meaning of the verse is: " Our will is to favour the oppressed with sending a Prophet and a revealed Book to them, with educating them and with inculcating the belief of monotheism in them. And as a result of that Our will is to make them the leaders and the inheritors of (their own) land." As such although this verse deals with a particular case, this case is one of those cases which are covered by the verse 55 of the Surah an-Nur. Apart from all that, it does not stand to reason to think that the verse says that the children of Isra'il would be made leaders simply because they are the oppressed irrespective of the fact whether a Prophet is or is not sent to them and whether they accept or do not accept his teachings.

The supporters of the theory of historical materialism from the view-point of Islam, may raise another point and say that Islamic culture in its spirit is either the culture of the oppressed class or that of the oppressors or of both. If it is the culture of the oppressed class, it must have the colour of that class, its addresses must be the oppressed people and its mission and its orientation must revolve round them. If Islamic culture is the culture of the oppressors, as claimed by the anti-Islamic elements, not only it must have the character of that class and must revolve round it, but it must also be reactionary anti-human and ungodly.

Obviously no Muslim is going to accept such a proposition. Moreover, the characteristic features of Islamic culture are a witness to the contrary. To say that Islamic culture is the culture of both the oppressed and the oppressors amounts to saying that it is an indifferent, isolated and irresponsible culture, which believes in leaving Allah's job to Allah and Caesar's job to Caesar - a culture that does not differentiate between good and bad, the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited, and treats all of them alike. Practically such a culture would be conservative and would work to the advantage of the oppressors and the exploiters. If in social conflicts between the aggressors and the aggrieved, some people adopt

the policy of irresponsible neutrality, they practically give support to the indifferent and neutral, practically it is the culture of the aggressors. Therefore in view of the fact that Islamic culture is not neutral and indifferent, nor does it support the oppressors, it should be regarded as the culture of the oppressed. Its objectives, its mission and its orientation should all be viewed from this angle.

Anyhow, this thesis is totally fallacious. In our opinion there are two main reasons why some Muslim intellectuals are inclined towards historical materialism. Firstly, they presume Islamic culture to be a revolutionary culture, hence they think, their inclination towards historical materialism is inevitable. All other such assertions as to say that the Quran indicates this or that, or that such and such is the impression gathered from the Ouran or a particular verse of it, are mere pretexts to justify that idea. It is here that these intellectuals have fallen away from Islamic way of thinking and have reduced the pure, human, natural and godly logic of Islam to the level of a materialistic logic.

These intellectuals are of the view that a culture can be revolutionary only if it exclusively concerns underprivileged and the oppressed class rises from this class, is oriented to this class and all its leaders are from this class. Its relation with other classes can be of hostility, antagonism and conflict only.

These intellectuals think that the way of a revolutionary culture must necessarily end at the belly, and that all great revolutions of history, including those brought about by the Prophets were the revolutions of the belly and for the belly. They have made the great Abuzar, who was a sage of the ummah, an earnest worshipper of Allah, an advocate of what is good and a determined warrior for the sake of Allah, merely an Abuzar who cared for his belly only and thought it not only proper but also imperative to fight every body for the sake of it. Above all his greatest virtue, according to these gentlemen, was that he knew what suffering hunger caused, for he personally had experienced its agony. He had developed a hatred against those who were responsible for creating a situation which caused hunger, and therefore made a continuous struggle against them. Here ends the personality of this Luqman of the Muslim ummah, this gnostic confessor of monotheism, this faithful fighter of Islam and this great man who was the second person to embrace Islam, is degraded to the level of a materialistic.

These intellectuals think that, as Marx holds, a revolution can be brought about only by a violent mass movement. (Andse Peter Marx and Marxism)

They are unable to imagine that a culture, a school of thought, an ideology, the objectives of which are divine, which is addressed to human nature, whose message is universal and which is oriented towards justice, equality, purity, spirituality, love, charity and struggle against tyranny, can create a great movement and cause a deep revolution - a human revolution full of Divine favour, spiritual liveliness and human values, although we have witnessed examples of such a revolution repeatedly over history. The Islamic revolution itself is a shining example of

this kind of revolution.

These intellectuals cannot understand that for a culture to be responsible and not to be neutral in its outlook, it is not necessary that it should rise from an oppressed and depressed class. They think that a comprehensive culture must necessarily be neutral and impartial. They cannot imagine that it is impossible for a comprehensive school or a comprehensive culture having a Divine basis and having been addressed to human nature, to be irresponsible, indifferent and impartial, and that is an attachment to Allah and human conscience that creates responsibility and commitment, not an attachment to the oppressed class. This is one of the main reasons of the misunderstanding of these gentlemen about the relation between Islam and a revolution.

Another basic reason of their misunderstanding should be looked for in the relation between Islam and its orientation. These intellectuals have clearly observed in the Quran's interpretation of the sacred movements, a strong inclination of the Prophets to safeguarding the interests of the oppressed. At the same time from the view-point of these gentlemen, the Marxist principle of harmony between the economic conditions of a people and their orientation, or their social basis on the one hand and their doctrinal and practical basis on the other, is an indisputable fact. From these two premises they have concluded that as according to the Quran all sacred and forward movements and consequently from the point of view of the Quran, history must have a materialistic and economic nature and economy must be the base of the social structure.

From what has so far been said it is clear that the Quran believes in the principle of the true state of human nature, and maintains that human life is governed by the logic of this state. Diametrically opposed to this logic is the logic of gain, which is the logic of the man sunk to the level of animals. Islam does not believe in the theory of harmony between economic basis and doctrinal basis. It regards this theory as inhuman, in the sense that it applies only -to the men who have not reached the level of humanity. The logic of such people alone is that of gain. As for those who are intellectually and morally trained, their logic is that of true state of nature.

It is a sort of indulgence that we say that the orientation of Islam is towards safeguarding the interests of the oppressed class. In fact, Islam is oriented towards justice and equality, though naturally it is the oppressed and the exploited who are mainly benefited by this orientation and it is the oppressors and the exploiters to whom it is detrimental and destructive.

Even where Islam wants to safeguard the rights and interests of a particular class, its main aim is the realization of a value and the foundation of a human principle. It is here that once again the extraordinary importance of the principle of the true state of human nature, which is expressly mentioned in the Quran and which in Islamic sciences should be considered to be the most important principle, becomes clear.

Much has been said about this principle, but scant attention has been paid to its depth and dimensions. Mostly it is observed that people talk of human nature, but as they do not pay adequate attention to the vast dimensions of this principle, in the end they pick up views quite contrary to it.

A shocking example of this kind of misunderstanding is the mistake about the origin of the religions. So far we have discussed the nature and origination of historical phenomena from the view-point of religion (particularly Islam). Now we would like to consider religion itself as a socio-historical phenomenon, which has continuously existed from the dawn of history and throw light on its origin and orientation.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the theory of historical materialism has introduced the Marxist principle, according to which there must be a harmony between the conditions which give rise to a culture and the orientation of that culture.

There is a principle, which, the mystics and the theosophist believers, applies to all the systems working in the universe. This principle says: "The ends return to the origins."

And Maulana Rumi has said:

" The parts are forced towards the whole,
Nightingales are in love with the rose's face;
What comes from the sea flows back into it,
And everything returns to its source,
Like the restless waves gushing from mountains-tops,
My soul burning with love, is restless to be free from the body."

The Marxists have enunciated a similar principle in respect of intellectual, philosophical and religious matters and finally applied it to cultural and social phenomena also. The Marxists say that every idea is oriented towards the direction from which it arose. This is almost the same thing as the idea that the ends return to the origins. The Marxists say that there exists no idea, religion or culture whether partial or impartial, which may aim at improving the social position of a class other than that from which it has originated. According to this school, every class has a special shade of thinking and a special taste. That is why in class dominated and socially divided societies there always exist two kinds of maladies, two philosophical ways of thinking, two moral systems, two styles of art, two kinds of literature and poetry, two outlooks on life and sometimes even two types of knowledge. There being two forms of infrastructure and property relations, all these things are divided into two forms and two systems.

Marx is personally of the opinion that there are two exceptions to this two-fold system,

namely religion and government. From the point of view of Marx these two are special inventions of the exploiting class which provide a special method of exploitation. Naturally these inventions are oriented towards the advantage of that class which has invented them. The exploited class because of its position, has neither originated religion nor government. They have been imposed on it by the opposite class. That is why there exists no two systems of religion or government.

Some Muslim intellectuals maintain that contrary to the view of Marx there actually do exist two systems of religion. According to them, just as in class dominated societies there are two systems of morals, art, literature and other cultural matters and each system has its own origination and orientation, one of them belonging to the ruling class and the other to the subject class, similarly there always exist two religious systems in society. One is the ruling religion which is the religion of the ruling class and the other is the subject religion which is the religion of the ruled.

The ruling religion is the religion of polytheism and the ruled religion is that of monotheism. The ruling religion is the religion of discrimination and the ruled religion is the religion of equality. The ruling religion is the religion of the justification of the existing situation and the ruled religion is the religion of revolution and the condemnation of the existing situation. The ruling religion is the religion of stagnation, tranquility and silence, and the ruled religion is the religion of uprising, agitation and protest. The ruling religion is the opium of society and the ruled religion is the tonic of society.

Therefore Marx's theory that the orientation of religion is always towards the interests of the ruling class and against those of the ruled and that religion is the opium of society, is true only in the case of the religion which is originated by the ruling class, though there was a time when it was practically the only religion which existed. On the other hand, this theory is not true in the case of the religion of the ruled, that is the religion of the true Prophets, though it was not allowed by the ruling systems to prevail and prosper.

This is the way how these intellectuals have tried to refute the Marxist theory that the orientation of religion is invariably towards the interests of the ruling class. These intellectuals think that they have thus proved the falsity of Marxism, but they do not realize that although what they have said is contrary to the personal views of Marx, Engels, Mao and other Marxist leaders, yet it is still a Marxist and a materialist interpretation of religion. It is shocking, they have paid no attention to this point. They have supposed that the ruled religion also has a class origin, and thus have unconsciously accepted the theory of harmony between the origin of the cultural phenomenon and its orientation. In other words they have accepted the theory of the materiality of religion. The only difference is that contrary to the view of Marx and the Marxists, they have maintained that there can be a religion originating among the exploited and underprivileged class and oriented towards their interests. Thus although they have been able to discover an interesting theory about the orientation of the ruled religion, yet they believe in the material and class origin of religion.

What conclusion can be drawn from what these intellectuals have held? The conclusion is that the ruling religion of polytheism is the only historical religion, which actually has had a definite role in life, for the compulsion of history has been at the back of the rulers and the political and economic power at their disposal. In these circumstances it was only their religion which could stay and prevail. As for the religion of monotheism, it was not possible for it to strike root and take a concrete form. Consequently it could not play any historical role in society, for a superstructure could not go ahead of the infrastructure.

As such the monotheistic movements of the Prophets were bound to fail. The Prophets preached the religion of equality, but before long the polytheistic religion under a cover of monotheism distorted their teachings. In contrasts, the polytheistic religion not only continued to thrive, but became stronger than ever before and more active in persecuting the underprivileged.

In fact, although the true Prophets tried to arrange some pieces of bread for the people, virtually they became a tool in the hands of their opponents for tightening the rope round the neck of the oppressed and the exploited. What the Prophets desired to accomplish through their teachings was not accomplished, and what was accomplished, was not desired by them. In the words of the jurists, what was intended, did not happen and what happened, was not intended.

The materialists and the anti-religious elements allege that religion is the opium of society. It is a narcotic and a cause of stagnation and sluggishness. It justifies tyranny and discrimination and preserves ignorance. This allegation is true but only to the extent of the ruling religion, that is the religion of polytheism, which is the religion of discrimination and which has been dominating over history. But it is incorrect as far as the true religion, the religion of monotheism, that is the religion of the oppressed and suppressed is concerned, which has always been kept out of the scene of life and history.

The only role which the religion of the ruled has been able to play is that of criticizing and denouncing. Its position has been that of a minority party in a legislature. The majority party forms its government, implements its programme and carries out its plans. But a minority party, howsoever progressive it may be, can do nothing except criticizing the policy of the majority and raising objection against it.

The majority party pays no attention to these criticisms. It runs society as it likes, and sometimes uses the criticism of the minority party for consolidating its own position. Without this criticism it could collapse under the ever-growing pressure of its opponents, but the criticism of the opposition serves as a warning to it, and enables it to take suitable counter measures to make its position stronger.

The above thesis also is not correct in any way, neither with regard to its analysis of the nature of polytheism and monotheism, nor with regard to the role of these two creeds as depicted in history. There can be no doubt, that some sort of religion has always existed in the world whether it be the religion of monotheism or polytheism. Even both these religions have existed side by side. As to the question whether the religion of polytheism is the first to come into existence or the religion of monotheism, the sociologists have expressed divergent views. Most of them maintain that in the beginning there existed the religion of polytheism only. Gradually the religious ideas developed and man reached the stage of monotheism. But there are some sociologists who hold a contrary view.

Religious traditions and some religious doctrines also support the second theory. Anyway, how did the religion of polytheism come into existence? Was it really invented by the despots of history to justify their tyrannies and their policy of discrimination, or are there some other reasons of its coming into being? Most of the authorities have mentioned some other reasons, for it is not possible to accept that polytheism is simply an outcome of social discrimination. It is even more unscientific to describe the religion of monotheism as a pretext of the underprivileged class against social discrimination and as an expression of its aspirations for the establishment of equality and fraternity. In addition, this view is totally inconsistent with Islamic principles.

The above statement paints the true Prophets of Allah as exonerated failures. According to the supporters of this theory, the Prophets were failures because they were defeated by falsehood and could achieve no success in any period of history. Their religion did not penetrate the core of society, nor was it able to secure any notable share in the religious life of the rulers. Its role was confined to criticizing and raising objections against the ruling religion. The Prophets were exonerated, because contrary to the allegation of the materialists, they never joined hands with the exploiters, nor were they a factor of stagnation and inertia. Their sympathy was not with the exploiting class. On the other hand they belonged to the underprivileged class, had sympathy with this class and struggled for the restoration of its lost rights.

As the true Prophets cannot be blamed with respect to the spirit of their mission, which is the same as their orientation, they cannot also be blamed for their failure, for which they are not responsible, because the compulsion of history arising from private property was at the back of their opponents. The emergence of the system of private property compulsively divided society into the exploiters and the exploited. That part of society which consisted of the exploiters, being the master of the material products of society, quite naturally became the master of its spiritual products also. In these circumstances the Prophets cannot be held responsible for their failure because in view of the compulsion of history it was not possible for them to resist the exploiters. Compulsion of history is a material version of fate and divine decree, though in this case the decree is issued not by Allah in the heaven, but by, a god on the earth, not by Absolute Allah, but by the material god, that is the ruling power called economic infrastructure of society, the main spring of which are the tools of production.

Although with this analysis of the situation, the true Prophets have been exonerated, yet the blame is laid on the world system which is generally described as a right system in which good always prevails over evil. The Islamic theosophists who have an optimistic view of the world system, claim that the world is good and sound. Evil and falsehood are only transient and temporary and their existence is not of essential character. The world system or for that matter, human social system is basically good. The Quran says: "**As for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remains in the earth."** (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:17)

The Quran says that in a conflict between the right and the wrong, the right is always victorious.

"We bring forward the truth to crush and destroy falsehood; it is doomed to vanish" (Surah al-Ambiya', 21:18)

The Quran also says that the support of Allah is always at the back of the true Prophets: **"We surely do help Our Messengers and those who believe, in the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses arise."** (Surah al-Ghafir, 40:51)

The Quran also asserts: **"We decreed that Our servants, the Messengers will certainly be victorious."** (Surah as-Saffat, 37:171)

But what these so called intellectuals say, contradicts this principle. Though they exonerate the Prophets and other past reformers, what they say amounts to blaming their Allah.

This is, in fact, a difficult problem. On the one hand the Quran views the world system with a sort of optimism, and insists that the social life of man revolves round what is right, theosophy also in accordance with its own principles claims that what is good and right always prevails over what is bad and false, and that the existence of evil and falsehood is accidental relative and unreal, without any real and independent existepce of its own.

On the other hand, a study of the past and present history causes a sort of pessimism about the prevailing system, and gives support to the view of those who assert that entire history is a series of tragedies, tyrannies, injustice and exploitation.

It is rather difficult to say whether we have misunderstood the world system or the social system of man, or alternatively is it that we wrongly think that the Quran views history and life with optimism? Or is it that we have not misunderstood anything but there exists an insoluble contradiction between the actuality and the Quran?

As far as the world system is concerned, we have discussed this point in our book, Divine

Justice, and with the grace of Allah resolved the doubt. As far as the course of history and man's social life are concerned, we propose to discuss the question in a later discourse under the heading, Conflict Between Truth and Falsehood, and to express our views on it. We shall be gratified if other thinkers, also express their views on this question.

[18] The Quran itself does not call them the mean, but simply quotes their opponents as calling them as such.

[19] The inquisitive may refer to Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:40-50, Surah al-Mu'min, 40:23-44, Surah Taha, 20:49-71, Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:16-49 and Surah al-Qasas, 28:36-39.

Islamic Philosophy of History

Criteria: To ascertain the view-point of a school in respect of the nature of history, a number of criteria may be used. By taking these criteria into consideration, it can be found out what exactly the approach of a particular school is on historical movements and the nature of historical events.

Here we recount the criteria which have come to our notice in this respect. Of course it is possible that there may exist some other criteria which might have not come to our notice.

Before mentioning these criteria and finding out the view of Islam on them, we deem it necessary to point out that from our point of view the Quran hints at certain principles which point to the prime importance of the spiritual basis of society as compared to its material basis. The Quran expressly enunciating one of these principle says: **"Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change what is related to their own conduct and behaviour."** (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13 :11)

In other words, Allah does not change the destiny of a people until and unless they themselves change their spirit. This verse expressly negates the theory of the economic compulsion of history. Here we mention the criteria so far as they could be ascertained by us and in their light would determine the logic of Islam.

I. Strategy of Mission: Every school has a message for society and calls upon people to accept it. For this purpose it has to use some special method which may suit its main objectives and be appropriate to its general approach on the nature of its historical movement. The preaching of a school consists of acquainting people with its basic view, and exerting pressure on special levers in order to stir and mobilize them.

For example, the school of Auguste Comte, which claims to be a sort of scientific school, holds that mental development is the essence of human evolution. This school believes that as far as his mentality is concerned, man has already passed through two stages, mythical and philosophical, and has now reached the scientific stage. As this school claims to be scientific, all the doctrines preached by it are couched in scientific terms and the levers which it wants to use as a means to mobilize people are also scientific levers.

Marxism is a revolutionary theory of the working class. Its preaching aims at creating consciousness of class contradictions among the workers. The levers on which it exerts pressure are obsessions and a sense of having been deprived and cheated.

The publicity that the various schools make and the points which they emphasize to mobilize people differ in accordance with the outlook of these schools on society and history. Similarly they have divergent views about the scope of their mission and about the morality and immorality of the use of force, in propagating and enforcing their doctrines in accordance with their particular outlook on the evolution of history and the development of man.

Certain schools, such as Christianity, maintain that as far as human beings are concerned only peaceful preaching conforms to the rules of morality. They consider the use of force in any form and under any circumstances to be immoral. That is why the Christian faith teaches that if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, offer your left cheek also, and if anyone seizes your forehead, surrender your cap also. On the contrary certain other schools such as that of Nietzsche are of the opinion that it is only the use of force that is moral, because man's greatest virtue lies in his power, and the most courageous man is equal to the highest man. From Nietzsche's point of view Christianity is tantamount to servility, weakness and humility, and is the main cause of the stagnation of humanity.

Some other schools hold that although morality depends on power and force, yet the use of force is not morally good in every case. From the view-point of Marxism the force that an exploiter uses against the exploited is immoral, because it is used to maintain the status quo, and therefore it is a factor of stagnation. But the force which the exploited uses against the exploiter is moral, for it is used to revolutionize society and to push it to a higher stage.

In other words, in the eternal conflict prevailing in society, one of the two parties fighting against each other, performs the role of the thesis and the other that of the anti-thesis. The force that performs the role of the thesis, being reactionary is immoral, and the force that performs the role of the antithesis, being revolutionary and evolutionary, is moral. But the same force which is moral at one stage may become immoral at a subsequent stage when it plays a negative and reactionary role against some other force which is revolutionary. As such morality is a relative term. What is moral at one stage may become immoral at another higher stage.

From the view-point of Christianity the contact of a school with its opponents whom it considers to be anti-evolutionary is in itself a simple contact. It is moral provided it is gentle and friendly. On the other hand, Nietzsche holds that the only moral contact is that of the powerful with the weak. According to him there is nothing more moral than power and there is nothing more immoral than weakness. There is no bigger crime or graver sin than being weak. From the view-point of Marxism there can be no contact between two groups holding opposite economic positions except that of force and the use of power. In this contact the use

of force by the exploiting class is immoral, because it is anti-evolutionary, and the use of force by the exploited class is moral. Further there can be no doubt that the contact of a young force with an old one always amounts to a clash and for that matter, a morally justifiable clash.

Islam censures all the above-mentioned theories. Morality is not confined to peaceful contacts and kindly preaching of benevolent nature. Sometimes the use of force also can be moral. That is why Islam considers it a sacred duty to fight against violence and tyranny and considers jihad and armed uprising, under certain circumstances, an obligation.

As for Nietzsche's theory, it is obviously absurd, inhuman and anti-evolutionary.

The theory of Marxism is based on the same mechanism as it believes to be the mechanism of history.

From the view-point of Islam force is not to be used against an anti-evolutionary group in the very first instance. Contrary to the teaching of Marxism it is to be used only at a subsequent stage. First the method of convincing and exhortation should be employed. The Quran says: **"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and exhortation."** (Surah an-Nahl 16:125)

The use of force against an anti-evolutionary front is allowed only when peaceful methods of convincing by arguments and through rational persuasion have been used and have failed.

In fact, all the Prophets who fought against their opponents, first tried to convince them by means of arguments and exhortation and often entered into debates with them. They resorted to force only when they could achieve no success or achieved only a partial one which they often did. The basic thing is that as Islam reflects in spiritual terms, it believes in the remarkable power of arguments and exhortation. As it believes, in the words of Marx, in the critical force of weapons, it also believes in the force of the weapon of criticism, and takes full advantage of that. Anyhow, it does not believe that it is the only force which should be used everywhere. It is because of the special spiritual outlook of Islam in respect of man and consequently in respect of society and history that it regards fighting against an anti-evolutionary front as the second stage of its contact with it, the first stage being the arguments, exhortation and debate.

That shows that the contact of a school with its adversaries may either be based on mere persuasion or on mere conflict or it may be a two-stage contact, firstly of persuasion and secondly of conflict and clash. The policy which a school pursues in this respect makes clear its view about the effectiveness of the force of logic and exhortation and the limits of their efficacy. Similarly it makes clear what that school thinks about the course of history and the role of conflict in it.

Now we shall discuss the other aspect. Let us see what kind of consciousness Islam strives to

awaken and what means it employs to invite people for embracing its message.

Islamic consciousness attaches paramount importance to the belief in the Divine Source and Resurrection.

This is the method which the Quran uses to inculcate its teachings, and says that it was used by the former Prophets also. The consciousness which Islam provides is in respect of the questions: "From where have you come? Where are you now? And where are you going? From where has the world come into being? What stage is it passing through? In which direction is it moving?" The first pinch of responsibility which the Prophets created was the pinch of the responsibility man owes to the whole creation and life. The pinch of social responsibility is a part of this pinch. As pointed out earlier, the chapters of the Quran revealed in Makkah during the first 13 years of the Holy Prophet's mission scarcely dealt with any subject other than that of the Divine Source and the Resurrection.[20]

The Holy Prophet started his mission with the declaration: "Say, there is no deity except Allah so that you may prosper."

This was a religious movement which aimed at purifying human belief and thought. It is true that monotheism has vast dimensions. If all the Islamic teachings are analysed, they can be summed up as monotheism, and if monotheism is expanded, it encompasses all these teachings. But we know that in the beginning the creed meant nothing more than an intellectual and practical turning from polytheistic doctrines and acts of worship to monotheistic doctrines and acts of worship. If the creed had any extensive meaning, people at that time were not conscious of that.

This teaching which struck roots in the depth of human nature, created in the followers of the Prophets such a zeal and spirit that they jealously defended their creed, left no stone unturned to spread it and did not hesitate to sacrifice their life and property for the sake of it. The Prophets began with what is known in our times as the super-structure of society and gradually reached its infrastructure. In the school of the Prophets man is more concerned with his faith and belief than with his personal gains and interests. In this school belief and thinking are the infrastructure; and work, that is the contact with nature and its gifts and with society, is the superstructure. Every religious preaching must be prophetic. In other words it should be accompanied by the remembrance of the Divine Source and the Resurrection. The Prophets mobilized society by awakening this feeling, unfolding this consciousness and shaking off the dust from conscience, having trust in the Rizwan (good pleasure) of Allah, His commands and His retribution. In the Quran at thirteen places the pleasure of Allah has been mentioned. By pressing this spiritual point the Quran has mobilized the society of the faithful. The understanding of this fact may be called Divine or cosmic consciousness.

In the next category there are the Islamic teachings which draw man's attention to his own

dignity and superior position. According to Islam man is not that animal which in the beginning was just like all other primates, but was so dexterous on the scene of the struggle for survival that over hundreds of millions of years he has acquired his present position. On the contrary man is the being who has a shadow of Divine spirit in him and before whom the angels have prostrated themselves. In spite of his animal propensities of lust and vice, man in himself has a pure essence which is against bloodshed, lies, corruption, meanness, lowliness, hatred and putting up with violence and tyranny. Man is a manifestation of Divine honour. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Honour belongs to Allah, to His Messengers and the believers."** (Surah al-Munafiqun, 63:8)

When the Holy Prophet says: "Man's nobility lies in his vigil at night and his honour lies in his not being in need of the help of other people"; or when Imam Ali says to his companions at Siffin: "If you die as victors, that is your life and if you live as the vanquished, that is your death." (See Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 51) or when Imam Husayn ibn Ali says: "To me death is nothing but good fortune and living with the tyrants is nothing but a matter of grief."

All these sayings stress the sense of dignity and honour which man possesses by virtue of his true nature.

The third stage is that of the consciousness of one's rights and social responsibilities. In the Quran we come across several instances in which stress has been laid on the lost rights with a view to arouse people to create a movement.

"How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the oppressed among men and of the women and the children, who say: Our Lord! Deliver us from this town of the oppressors, and appoint for us from You a protector and send one that will help us?" (Surah an-Nisa 4:75)

In this verse in order to persuade people to embark upon jihad, stress has been laid on two spiritual values: (i) that their movement is for the cause of Allah, 0i) and that helpless people are being oppressed by the tyrants.

In the following verse the Quran says:

"Sanction is given to those who fight because they have been wronged; Allah is indeed able to give them victory. Those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said: Our Lord is Allah for had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters, churches, oratories and mosques wherein the Name of Allah is often mentioned, would have assuredly been pulled down. Surely Allah helps the one who helps Him. Surely Allah is Strong, Almighty. Those who if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the zakat and exhort to do what is right and restrain from what is evil. And to Allah belongs the issue of all affairs." (Surah al-

Hajj, 22:39-41)

In this verse we see that while giving permission of jihad, a reference has been made to the lost rights of the Muslims. At the same time a value which is higher than the lost rights, and which forms the real philosophy of defence has also been mentioned. The Quran says that if jihad is not undertaken and the believers do nothing, the safety of the mosques and other houses of worship, which constitute the throbbing heart of the spiritual life of society, would be endangered and they would cease functioning. In the Surah an-Nisa' the Quran says: **"Allah does not like the utterance of harsh speech except by one who has been wronged."** (Surah an-Nisa, 4:148)

Evidently this is a sort of encouragement of the uprising by the oppressed. In the Quran after censuring the poets for their extravagantly fanciful ideas, adds: **"Except those who believe, do good deeds, remember Allah much and vindicate (by means of poetry) themselves after they have been wronged."** (Surah as Shu'ara, 26:227)

Although according to the Quran and the Sunnah (the conduct of the Holy Prophet) it is a grave sin to submit to tyranny and it is the duty of everyone to realize one's rights, these things have been mentioned as values having human aspect. The Quran does not rely on any psychic obsession nor does it excite jealousy or a carnal desire. For example it never says that such and such group is enjoying a lavish style of life, eating, drinking and making merry; why don't you take its place?

If an attempt is made to seize the property of someone, Islam does not allow the owner to keep quiet on the plea that material goods have no value. Similarly if an attempt is made to violate the honour of a person, it is the duty of that person not to take the matter lightly or keep quiet. According to a tradition, a person who is killed defending his honour or his property is to be regarded as a martyr who has laid down his life for the cause of Allah. If Islam urges people to defend their property, that does not mean that Islam asks them to amass wealth or to be greedy. It only asks them to defend their rights. Similarly when it considers it a duty to defend one's honour, it does so because it regards chastity as the highest social value and considers man to be the custodian of it.

II. An Ideology's Nomenclature:

Every school of thought identifies its followers with a specific name. For example the racial theory is the distinctive mark of the adherents of that theory. When they say " We", they mean the whites. The Marxist theory is the theory of the workers. The followers of this school call themselves workers and identify themselves by this name. When they say " We" , they mean workers. The Christians simply ascribe themselves to the person of Christ as if they have no doctrine nor any ideology. Their mark of identification is that they look for Christ and want to join him.

It is a characteristic of Islam that it has not chosen any racial, class, professional, local, regional or individual label to introduce its school and its followers. The adherents of this school are not known by any such designation as the Arabs, the Semites, the poor, the rich, the oppressed, the whites, the blacks, the Asians, the Easterns, the Westerns, the Muhammadans, the Quranians, the Qiblites etc. None of the above names represents the real identity of the adherents of Islam. When the question of the identity of this school and its followers arises, all these names vanish. Only one thing remains, that is the relation between man and Allah. Islam means submission to Allah. The Muslims are an ummah that submits to Allah, to truth and to the revelation and the inspiration rising from the horizon of truth and communicated to the heart of the most worthy persons. Then what is the nature of the identity of the Muslims? What label does their religion attach to them and under what banner does it want them to assemble? The answer is Islamic submission to truth.

The criterion of unity that every school approves for its followers is a reliable means of judging its aims and objectives.

It also helps us to understand the outlook of school regarding man, society, and history.

III. Favourable and Unfavourable Conditions for Acceptability:

We have said earlier that different schools have different view about the mechanism of the movement of history. One school is of the opinion that the natural mechanism of this movement is the pressure of one class against another class. Another school holds that it is the friction between a reactionary class. Still another school maintains that the real mechanism should be looked for in the pure state of human nature, which is evolutionary and progressive. Some other schools have some other opinions. Every school in its teachings enumerates such causes, conditions, obstacles and impediments of the movement of history. as are appropriate to its conception of its mechanism The school which believes that the mechanism of the movement of history is the pressure of a class against another, in order to mobilize society and bring it into motion tries to create such pressure if it does not already exist. Marx in some of his works has pointed out that the existence of a subjugated and oppressed class is absolutely necessary for the emergence of a class of free people. At the end of his study he says: " Where does the possibility of liberation for the German nation lie? Our answer is that: We must form a class which is decisively in chains.' Such an ideology regards reforms as an obstacle in the way of a revolution, because reforms reduce pressure and a reduction in pressure prevents the explosion or at least delays the revolution. In contrast, a school that believes that movement is an intrinsic and essential quality of society never suggests the creation of shackles for any class, for it does not regard pressure as a necessary condition of evolution, nor does it consider reforms as an obstacle in the way of progress.

What does Islam say about the conditions conducive to progress and the obstacles which may block its way? In Islam all prerequisite conditions and the difficulties in this respect revolve

round what may be called a pure state of human nature. That is why on some occasions the retention of primordial purity has been mentioned as a condition. The Qur'an says: **"It is a guidance to the pious."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2).[21]

In some places a prick of conscience ensuing from a sense of responsibility and duty which one owes to the world, has been mentioned as a condition in such words: **"Who fear their Lord in the unseen."** (Surah al-Anbiya', 21:49) and **"Who fears the Beneficent in secret."** (Surah Ya sin, 36 :11)

At some places a 'living nature' has been mentioned as a condition. **"To warn him who is alive."** (Surah Ya sin, 36:70)

Islam maintains that its call is accepted by those who are pure, have a sense of responsibility and live a natural life. As opposed to these qualities it mentions such qualities as the spiritual and moral corruption, the sin of the heart, the rust of the heart, the hearts becoming sealed, the loss of insight, the heart's becoming inattentive, the deformation of the soul, the observance of ancestral customs and habits, the following in the footsteps of the elders and the notables, acting upon conjectures etc. The Quran regards all such things as obstacles in the way of the development of society and its moving towards peace and prosperity. Extravagance and luxurious living are also considered to be obstacles as they turn a man into a beast.

According to the Islamic teachings the young people are more prepared to accept the truth than the aged. The reason is that psychic pollutions have not yet spoiled their true nature. Similarly the poor, being free from the pollution of wealth are better prepared than the rich.

The mention of this sort of qualifications and disqualification indicates that according to the Quran the mechanism of social and historical changes is rather spiritual than economic and material.

IV. Rise and Fall of Societies:

As a rule every school expresses its view about the causes of the progress and the decline of societies. The causes which a school considers to be the basic factors of the progress and the decline of society demonstrate its point of view about society, and about the evolutionary movements of history and its decline.

The Holy Qur'an, especially with reference to the stories and anecdotes related to these matters, explains its views. So let us see what things it regards as basic and infrastructural and what things as superstructural. Does it look upon the economic and material questions as the basic question or considers the doctrinal and moral questions to be so, or does not discriminate between these two types of questions?

In the Quran on the whole we come across four factors which affect the rise and fall of a society. We briefly refer to them here:

(i) Justice and Injustice: This point has been hinted at by the Quran in many of its verses including the second verse of the Surah al-Qasas quoted by us earlier: **"Surely Fir'awn exalted himself in the earth and divided its people into castes. A section among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Surely he was of those who work corruption."**

In this verse first it has been said that Fir'awn exalted himself. He claimed to be a super-god and regarded others as his slaves. In different manners he discriminated between his subjects and created rift among them. The Quran says that he oppressed a section of his people, killed their sons and spared their women (with a view to make them serve Firawn and his tribe). It describes him as one of those who work corruption. This description implies that such social tyrannies as were perpetrated by him, were likely to destroy the foundation of society.

(ii) Unity And Discord: The verse 103 of the Surah Ale Imran urges all to be united on the basis of faith and to hold fast to the bond of Allah. The verse 105 of the same Surah says: "**And be not like those who separated and disputed."** The verse 153 of the Surah al-An'am also says almost the same thing.

In the following verses the Quran says: **"Say: He is able to inflict punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with dissension and make you taste the tyranny one of another."** (Surah An'am 6:65)

"Do not quarrel with one another for then you will be weak and your power will depart from you." (Surah al Anfal 8:46)

(iii) Observance Or Disregard of Allah's Command About Exhorting to What is Good and Restraining from What is Evil:

The Quran has at many places stressed the necessity of acting according to this command. The following verse implies that the people who ignore this important duty, may be ruined and doomed to oblivion. One of the reasons why the Children of Isra'il were deprived of the blessing of Allah was that: **"They restrained not one another from the wickedness they did. Surely evil was what they used to do."** (Surah al Ma'idah 5:79)

(iv) Moral Depravity and Licentiousness:

There are various verses in the Quran in this regard also. Some of them describe luxurious living as a cause of ruin. In many other verses the word Zulm (injustice; cruelty, oppression, transgression, tyranny) has been mentioned. In Quranic terminology injustice does not

exclusively mean violation of the rights of an individual or of a group. It also includes the injustice done by an individual to himself or by a people to themselves. Every kind of moral depravity and going astray from the right path of humanity is injustice. The conception of injustice in the Quran is vast enough to include injustice done to others and the indulgence in all corrupt and immoral deeds. Mostly this word has been used in the Quran in this second sense. The number of the verses of the Quran in which injustice in its wider sense has been described as the cause of the ruin of a people, is too extensive to be cited here.

From the sum total of these criteria we can gather the view-point of the Quran in respect of the basis of society and history. The Quran believes in the definite and decisive role of many things which may be called superstructural.

[20] Some contemporary so-called Muslim intellectuals absolutely deny the existence of even a single verse in the Quran referring to the Resurrection. Wherever in the Quran there is a mention of 'dunya' (this world), they interpret it as the lower system of life, that is the system of social discrimination and exploitation, and wherever there is a mention of 'Akhirah' (the next world) they interpret it as the higher system of life free from social discrimination, inequality, exploitation and private property. If 'Akhirah' really signifies this, then that means that the Quran one thousand years before the inception of materialist school gave up religion as the lost proposition.

[21] This shows that the Marxist theory that the use of force by the exploited class is moral, for it has an effective role in progress and its use by the class of the exploiters is immoral, because in this case it is a factor of stagnation is not a valid theory. When this school believes that the pressure of the exploiters plays as much role in the development as the revolutionary reaction of the exploited class, evidently the action of the exploiters should be as moral as the action of the exploited. The only difference between the two forces is that one looks to the past and the other to the future. Otherwise both of them play the same role in development. Hence the criterion of their morality and immorality should be the intention behind them and not that one looks to the past and the other to the future.

Evolution and Change in History

What we have said so far concerns one of the two important problems of history. The question so far dealt with was whether the nature of history is materialistic or not. Another important question is that of the evolution of history.

We know that social life is not confined to man alone. There are some other living beings also, which more or less lead some sort of social life based on mutual cooperation and division of labour and sharing of responsibilities under well organized laws and rules.

We all know that the honey-bee is one of such living beings. But there is one basic difference between the social existence of other living beings and that of man. The social existence of other living beings always remains fixed and static. No change or development in the system of their life or in the words of Morris Metterlink, in their culture - if that expression is correct ever takes place.

In contrast, the social life of man not only develops and changes, but it also gradually gathers speed and gains momentum. That is why the history of the social life of man has been divided from different angles into distinct periods distinguished from each other.

For example, from the view-point of the means of living, it has been divided into the periods of hunting, agriculture and industrial development. From the view-point of economic system it has been divided into the period of primitive com munism, the period of slavery, the period of feudalism, the period of capitalism and the period of socialism. From political point of view it has been divided into the period of. tribal rule, the period of despotism, the period of aristocracy, and the period of democracy. From the point of view of sex it has been divided into the period of matriarchy and the period of patriarchy. So on and so forth.

Why is this kind of development not found in the social life of other animals? Which basic factor is the cause of man's shifting from one social period to another? In other words, what is that which pushes life forward and is found in man and not found in animals? What is the mechanism of this progress?

In this connection the philosophers of history usually raise a question. They ask whether the social life of man has really made any progress over history, and if it has, by what criterion,

we can judge it and be sure of it.

Some sociologists[22] doubt that the changes which have taken place may really be called a progress or an evolution. Some other sociologists hold that the movement of history is circular. They claim that history moves from a point, and after passing several stages reaches the same point again, and then once more begins to move in the same fashion as previously.

For example, a stiff tribal system is set up by the nomads, possessing will and courage. The tribal government naturally leads to the establishment of an aristocracy. The dictatorial actions of the aristocratic government culminate in a general revolution and the establishment of a democracy. Some time later the chaos and confusion caused by too much freedom under a democratic government once again lead to despotism with a tribal spirit.

At present we do not propose to enter into the discussion of this point and leave it to some other occasion. As a basis of further study we assume that on the whole history has marched forward and made progress.

It may be pointed out that those who maintain that history is going forward admit that the forward movement of history does not mean that the future of all societies under all circumstances is better than their past, that societies always and without any interruption move forward, and that there is no chance of their ever declining and moving backwards.

There is no doubt that societies come to a halt, decline, retrogress, turn to the left or the right and finally fade out. Nevertheless on the whole they move forward.

The question, what the motivating force of history and the factor of the social development is, has been usually so described in the books of philosophy that the incorrectness of the description becomes clear after a little consideration of it. Usually the following views are expressed about this question:

I. The Racial Theory:

According to this theory, certain races are mainly responsible for the advancement of history. It is supposed that some races have the capability of creating culture and civilization, whereas some others do not possess such talents. Some races can produce science, philosophy, ethics, art and technology. Whereas some others are mere consumers of these commodities, not the producers of them.

Hence, it is concluded that there should be a sort of division of labour among different races. The races which are fit for politics, education and the production of culture, art and technology should be exclusively responsible for human, fine and sublime activities. On the other hand the races which do not have such a capability should be excused from these

activites and instead should be entrusted with manual and semi-animal work which does not require high thinking and sublimity of taste. This was the consideration why Aristotle who held such views, regarded some races fit for owning slaves and other races unfit for that.

Some thinkers believe that only particular races are able to lead the course of history. For example, they say that northern races in this respect are superior to southern races. It were the northern races which pushed human culture forward. Count Gobino, the famous French philosopher, who was for three years French Ambassador to Iran about hundred years ago, supported this theory.

II. The Geographical Theory:

According to this theory it is a particular sort natural environment that produces culture, education and industry. For example, the temperate regions produce moderate temperaments; and powerful brains. In the first part of the *Qanun*, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) has discussed at length the effects of the natural environment on the mental and temperamental personality of man.

According to this theory what pushes history forward is not the hereditary factor of race and blood. It is not that a particular race pushes history forward in every climate and every region and that another race wherever it may be living lacks that capacity. The difference in the capabilities of different races is the result of the difference in their environment. With the dispersion of races their capabilities also disperse. As such it is particular areas and regions which push history forward and cause new developments. The French sociologist of the 17th century Montesquieu in his celebrated book, *De Lesprit des lois* (the Spirit of the Law) advocates this theory.

III. Theory of Intellectual Giants:

According to this theory all historical developments, whether scientific, political, economic, technical or moral, are produced by extraordinarily intelligent and ingenious persons. Man in this respect differs from all other living beings. Individual members of other species have biologically almost similar capabilities. At least there appears to be no appreciable difference.

In contrast, among the human beings as regards to their capabilities a great disparity is often observed. Exceptionally genius persons are found in every society. Whenever these geniuses possessing extraordinary intellect, taste, will or initiative appear in a society, they push it forward scientifically, technically, morally, politically or militarily.

According to this theory, most of the human beings lack initiative and creativity. They only follow and consume the ideas and the products of the industry of others.

In fact, more or less always, in every society there exists a minority which possesses a creative bent of mind. It has initiative, possesses original ideas, and goes ahead of others. It is this minority that pushes history forward and brings it to a new stage. The well-known English philosopher Thomas Carlyle believed that history was shaped by outstanding individuals. In his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* he has made the following remarks about the Holy Prophet of Islam:

"The history of every nation is a manifestation of one or more than one outstanding personalities. More properly speaking, the history of every nation is a manifestation of the personality and the genius of one or more than one heroes. For instance, the history of Islam is a manifestation of the personality of the Holy Prophet; the history of modern France is a manifestation of the personality of Napoleon; and the Soviet history of the last sixty years is a manifestation of the personality of Lenin."

IV. The Economic Theory:

According to this theory economy is the motivating force of history. All social and historical affairs of a nations whether they are cultural, political, military or social, are a reflection of the production methods and production relations of that society. It is a change in the economic basis of a society that transforms its structure and pushes it forward. The geniuses mentioned above are not more than a manifestation of the economic, political and social needs of society caused by a change in the implements of production. Karl Marx, the Marxists on the whole and sometimes even some non-Marxists support this theory. Perhaps it is the most popular theory of our time.

V. The Divine Theory:

According to this theory, whatever appears on the earth, is a heavenly affair which comes down to the earth in accordance with the profound wisdom of Allah. All historical changes and developments are a manifestation of His judicious will and profound wisdom. Therefore it is Divine will that pushes history forward and brings about changes in it. History is a scenario of the Divine Will. Bishop Bossuet, a well known historian and tutor of Louis XV advocated this theory.

These are the theories which have been usually discussed in the books of philosophy of history in connection with the causes that move history.

From our point of view none of these theories represents the correct position and they all are the result of some sort of a confusion. We want to find out the causes that move history, but these theories are largely irrelevant to what we want. For instance the racial theory is nothing more than a sociological theory. It is relevant only when the question is whether different human races have or have not some hereditary capabilities and whether they all are or not

intellectually of the same level. If they are of the same level, that means that all races equally take part in the movement of history or at least theoretically they can. If they are not of the same level, that means that some races alone are fit to take part in the process of pushing history forward. So far this theory has been formulated correctly, but it does not resolve the mystery of the philosophy of history. Suppose we admit that all historical developments are effected by a certain race. Still our problem remains unsolved, for we still do not know why human life or the life of any particular human race develops, whereas animal life remains stationary. The question whether the factor of progress is one race or all races, does not unveil the secret of the movement of history.

The same is the case with the geographical theory. It is a useful theory and relates to an important sociological question as it shows that environments play an effective role in the mental, intellectual, temperamental and physical growth of man. Some environments keep man within or near the limits of an animal and others further his distance and distinction from animals. According to this theory, history moves among the men of certain regions and territories only. In other regions it is stationary and monotonous. But the main question still remains where it was. For example honey-bees and other gregarious animals lack historical movement even in the regions conducive to mental growth. Then what is the real cause of the difference between these two kinds of living beings, one kind of which remains stationary, whereas the other kind always moves from one stage to another?

The divine theory is still more inconsistent than these other theories. Is history alone a manifestation of the Divine Will? In fact the whole world from the beginning to the end including all causes and hindrances, is a manifestation of the Will of Allah.

The Divine Will bears the same relation to all causes of the world. As the developing and changing life of man is a manifestation of the Divine Will, similarly the stationary and monotonous life of the bees is also a manifestation of His Will. The real question is what that system is with which the Divine Will has endowed the life of man to make it developing while the life of other animals is stationary because it is devoid of that system.

The economic theory lacks technical aspect and has not been advanced as a principle. The economic theory of history, as it has been propounded, throws light on the nature of history only and shows that it is material and economic, and that all other affairs are tantamount only to forms or nonessential characteristics. Consequently, all affairs of society necessarily change. But all that is a question of 'if'. The real question still remains unanswered. Even if we admit that economy is the infrastructure of society and with its change the whole society undergoes a change, the question is why it is so. What is that factor or factors which change the whole superstructure following a change in the infrastructure? Economy may be the infrastructure of society, but that does not necessarily mean that it is the motivating force of history also. Of course if the supporters of this theory instead of describing economy as the infrastructure of society, had described it as the motivating force of history, considered materiality of history to be enough for its dynamism, brought out the question of the inner

contradiction of society and said that the real motivating force is the contradiction between the infrastructure and the superstructure of society or the contradiction between the two aspects of the infrastructure (implements of production and production relations), the theory would have been presented properly.

There is no doubt that the aim of the proponents of the above theory in its present form is to say that the real cause of all movements of history is the inner contradiction between the implements of production and the production relations. But we are concerned with the correct presentation of the theory, not with what is in the minds of its proponents.

The theory of the intellectual giants, irrespective of the fact whether it is correct or incorrect, directly relates to the philosophy of history or the motivating factor of history.

As such so far we have got only two theories about the force which moves history. One of them being the theory of the giants, according to which history is created by the outstanding individuals. In fact, this theory claims that most members of society or almost all of them lack initiative, originality and power of leadership. They can bring about no change in society. But from time to time a very small minority with an extraordinary imaginative and creative capacity emerges in society. Its members take initiative, plan things, take decisions and pull the ordinary people behind them. Thus they bring about a change. These heroic personalities are the product of extraordinary events, both natural and hereditary, but not of the social conditions or the material needs of society.

The second theory is that of the contradiction between the infrastructure and the superstructure of society. This theory may properly be called the theory of the motivity of economy. We have already referred to it, and need not dwell on it again.

There is a third theory also and that is the theory of the inborn characteristics. Man's nature is such that he has certain inherent characteristics which make his life evolutionary.

One of these characteristics is his ability of gathering and preserving experiences. Whatever knowledge and information man acquires through his experience, he retains it in his mind and uses it as a basis for his further experiments.

Another characteristic of man is his capacity of learning through speech and writing. Through these mediums he can transmit his experience to others. The experience of one generation is preserved for the benefit of the subsequent generations by means of speech and writing and thus human experience continues to pile up. That is why the Quran has given special importance to the blessings of speech and pen. The Quran says: ***"The Beneficent has made known the Quran. He has created man. He has taught him articulate utterance."*** (Surah ar-Rahman, 55:1-4) At another place it says: ***"Read: In the name of your Lord Who created, ---created man from a clot. Read: And your Lord is the Most Bounteous, who taught by the***

pen." (Surah al-Alaq, 96:1-4)

The third characteristic of man is his being equipped with the power of reason and initiative. By means of this mysterious power he can originate things, for he is a manifestation of the creative power of Allah. His fourth characteristic is his inherent desire to do something original. In other words man is not only potentially creative, but he can actually create things whenever necessary. Not only that, but a creative tendency has been implanted in his nature.

Man's capability of remembering and preserving his experience, his capacity of communicating it to others and his inherent tendency to be creative combined together are a force that always pushes man forward. In other animals there exists neither a capacity of remembering their experience and communicating it to others[23] nor originality and initiative, nor any strong desire of being creative. That is the reason why the animals are stationary and man marches forward. Now we shall scrutinize these theories.

The Role of Personality in History

Some people have asserted that history is a struggle between ingenuity and normal limits. The common and average people support the situation to which they have been accustomed while the geniuses want to replace the existing situation with a better one. Carlyle claims that history begins with the geniuses and the heroes. This theory is in fact based on two presumptions:

The first presumption is that society is devoid of nature and personality. The individuals composing society do not form a real compound. All individuals are independent of each other.

They act and react upon each other, but they do not form a compound having its own collective spirit, personality, nature and special laws. They all have their individual mentality and way of thinking. The individuals; bear the same relation to society as the trees to a forest. Social events are nothing but a total of individual events. As such society is mostly governed by the universal and general causes.

The second presumption is that individual human beings have been so created that they vastly differ from each other. Although generally speaking the human beings according to the terminology of the philosophers are rational animals, yet almost all of them lack originality and creativity. Most of them are the consumers of culture and civilization, not the producers of them. In this respect they differ from the animals only so far that the animals cannot even be the consumers of culture. The spirit of majority is that of imitation, unquestioning adoption and hero-worship.

But a very small minority of men consists of heroes, geniuses, independent thinkers of

outstanding calibre, of those who have an original and creative spirit, and of those who possess a strong will. They are distinct from the majority. Had there been no scientific, philosophical, artistic, political, social, ethical and technical geniuses and heroes, humanity would not have moved a step forward and would have remained where it was in the beginning.

From our point of view both these presumptions are defective. As for the first presumption, we have, while discussing society, proved that society has its own personality, nature, laws and norms and all events take place in accordance with its established general traditions. These traditions in themselves are progressive and evolutionary. Therefore we must set aside this presumption and then see whether, in spite of the fact that society has its personality, nature and traditions, it is possible for the personality of the individual to play any role in the march of events. We will discuss this point later. As for the second presumption, although it cannot be denied that the human beings have been so created that they differ from one another,

it is not correct to say that only heroes and geniuses have creative power and all others are the consumers of culture and civilization. In fact more or less all human beings have creative capacity, and as such all individuals or at least most of them can take part in productive and creative activities, though their share may be insignificant as compared to that of a genius.

Diametrically opposed to the theory that personalities create history, there is another theory which asserts that it is history that creates personalities. In other words, it is actually the existing social needs that create a personality.

Montesquieu has said: "Great men and important events are the signs and the results of the longer and greater events." Hegel said: "Great men do not give birth to history; but act as midwives." The great men are the symbols, not the agents. According to the thinking of those who like Durkheim believe that collective spirit is the basic thing, and that the individuals as such absolutely lack personality and they borrow their whole personality from society, the individuals including big personalities are nothing but a manifestation of the collective spirit of society. In the words of Mahmud Shabistari they are a screen of the window of collective spirit.

From the view-point of those who like Marx consider individual consciousness to be a manifestation of the collective material needs, the personalities are a mere manifestation of the material and economic needs of society.

[22] See: E.H. Carr, What is History?; Will Durant, Studies in History, The Pleasures of Philosophy, pp. 291-312

[23] Some animals can transmit to others what they have learnt, but only on the level of daily events, not on the level of any scientific experience. The Quran also hints at this fact when it says: ***"When they (Sulayman's army) arrived in the valley of ants, one ant said to the***

others, 'Enter your dwellings lest you be carelessly crushed by Sulayman and his army." (Surah an-Naml, 27:18)

Imamat and Khilafat

Leadership

The discussion of the question of Imamat may raise certain queries in the mind of our readers. Here we advance our views about these queries. In this respect the main questions are only two.

I. Every nation tries to project the good points of its history, and as far as possible wants to conceal its weaknesses. The events in which an institution or an ideology may take pride are considered to be the signs of its authenticity and veracity, and the unpleasant events of its history create doubts about its genuineness and are regarded as the signs of the weakness of its creative power. Hence the discussion of the question of Imamat and Khilafat, especially the repeated narration of the ugly events of the early Muslim period is likely to diminish the religious zeal and fervor of the new generation, which is already passing though a spiritual crisis. In the past such a discussion might have produced the desired results and diverted the attention of the Muslims from one denomination to another. But in modern times it only weakens faith in the very fundamentals. When others conceal the ugly aspects of their history, why should we, the Muslims try to bring out the ugly aspects of our history and even magnify them?

   We do not concur with the above views. We affirm that should the review of history mean to bring out the undesirable events only, the effect will be as disastrous as stated above. But it is also a fact that if we remain contented with portraying only the bright aspects of our history and suppress the unpleasant events, that would mean a distortion of history, not a review of it.

   Basically no history is free from ugly and undesirable events. History of every nation, and basically history of mankind, is a bundle of pleasant and unpleasant events. It cannot be otherwise. Allah has created no people free from sins. The difference between the history of various nations, communities and creeds lies in the proportion of the happy and ugly events and not in the fact that anyone of them has only happy or only ugly events.

   The Holy Quran has very beautifully expressed the fact that man has good as well as

bad points. The summary of what it has said is that Allah informed the angels of His intention to create a vicegerent (Adam). The angels who knew only the weak points of the new being, were astonished and wanted to know what considerations prompted Allah to take such an action. Allah told them that He knew the good and the bad points of that being and that they were not aware of all the characteristics of that being.

If we look at the history of Islam from the view-point of the events manifesting faith and human values, we will find that it has no rival. This history is full of heroic deeds. It is laden with lustre and brilliance and is replete with a display of human qualities. The existence of a few ugly spots does not tarnish its beauty and majesty.

No nation can claim that its history possesses more bright events than the history of Islam, or that the ugly events of Islamic history are more numerous than the ugly events of its own history.

A Jew in order to taunt Imam Ali with the events which took place in the early period of Islam over the question of Khilafat, said: "You no sooner buried your Prophet, than began quarrelling about him.

What a beautiful reply Imam Ali gave! He said: *"You are wrong. We did not differ about the Prophet himself. We differed only as to what instructions we had received from him. But your feet had not dried of sea water when you said to your Prophet: "Appoint a god for us like the gods they have." He said: "You are an ignorant people."* (Nahjul Balaghah)

Imam Ali meant to say: "Our differences did not relate to the principles of Monotheism and Prophethood. What we differed about was whether the Quran and Islam foresaw a particular person to be the successor to the Holy Prophet or his successor was to be elected by the people. In contrast you Jews during the very lifetime of your Prophet raised a question which was entirely contrary to your religion and the teachings of your Prophet."

Furthermore, even if it is supposed that in ordinary cases it is permissible to overlook the ugly events of history, how can it be proper to ignore the most basic question affecting the destiny of Islamic, society, that is the question of Islam's leadership. To overlook such a question means overlooking the well-being of the Muslims.

Moreover, if it is a fact that some historical rights have been violated and those to whom these rights were due were the most virtuous personalities of the Muslim Ummah, then overlooking these historical facts would mean nothing but cooperation between the tongue and the pen on the one hand and the sword of injustice on the other.

II. The second objection to the discussion of these questions is that such a discussion is inconsistent with the duty of ensuring Islamic unity. All the misfortunes of the Muslims have been due to the communal differences. It is communal discord and disturbances which has swept away the Muslim power, damaged the Muslims' dignity and made them subservient to alien nations. The most effective weapon in the hand of colonialism, whether old or new, is the enflaming of these old rancours. In all Muslim countries without exception the lackeys of colonialism are busy with creating dissension among the Muslims in the name of religion and sympathy with Islam. Have we not already suffered enough on account of these old disputes so that we should continue to pursue them? Do not such discussions mean helping colonialism?

In reply to this criticism, we would like to say that there is no doubt that unity is the most important requirement of the Muslims, and that these old rancours are the basic cause of all troubles in the Muslim world. It is also true that the enemy is always ready to exploit these disputes. But it appears that the critic has misunderstood the concept of Muslim unity.

Muslim unity which has been a subject of discussion among the scholars and the broad-minded sections of the Muslims does not mean that the Muslim sects should ignore their principles of faith and articles of acts for the sake of unity, adopt the common features of all the sects and set aside the peculiarities of all. How can this be done when this is neither logical nor practical. How can the followers of any sect be asked to ignore for the sake of preserving the unity of Islam and the Muslims, any of their beliefs or practical principles which they consider to be a part of the basic structure of Islam? Such a demand would mean to overlook a part of Islam in the name of Islam?

There are other ways of persuading people to stick to a principle or to give it up. The most natural of them is to convince others by means of logical argumentation. Faith is not a matter of expedience, nor can it be imposed on any people or taken away from them at will.

We are Shi'ahs and are proud of following the chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet. We do not regard as compromisable any act which has been even slightly commended or condemned by the Holy Imams. In this regard we are not willing to fulfil the expectation of anybody, nor do we expect others to give up any of their principles in the name of expediency or for the sake of Muslim unity. All that we expect and wish is the creation of an atmosphere of good will so that we, who have our own jurisprudence, traditions, scholastic theology, philosophy, exegesis and literature, should be able to offer our goods as the best goods, so that the Shi'ah should no more be isolated and so that the important markets of the Muslim world should not be closed to the fine material of Shi'ah Islamic knowledge.

The adoption of the common Islamic features and the rejection of the peculiarities of all sects is contrary to the compound consensus of opinion among the Muslims and the product of this action will be something absolutely un-Islamic, for the peculiarities of some sect or other

must be the basic part of the structure of Islam. Islam bereft of all peculiarities and distinguishing features has no existence.

The most prominent among those who advanced the noble idea of Islamic unity, in our times, have been the late Ayatullah Burujardi among the Shiah and Allamah Shaykh Abdul Majid and Allamah Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut among the Sunnis. But they never had such a view of Islamic unity in their mind. All that these learned men advocated was that the various Muslim sects in spite of their different theologies should on the basis of the large number of common features existing among them, form a common front against the dangerous enemies of Islam. These learned men never proposed under the name of Islamic unity a religious unity which is not practical.

In fact, there is a technical difference between a united party and a united front. A united party requires that all its members should have a common ideology and a common way of thinking in all matters except their personal affairs, whereas a common front means that various parties and groups, despite their ideological differences should, by means of the common features existing among them, form a common front against their common enemy. The formation of a common front against the common enemy is not inconsistent with defending one's ideology and inviting other members of the front to follow it. The main idea of the late Ayatullah Burujardi was to pave the ground for the dissemination of the knowledge of the Prophet's chosen descendants among his Sunni brethren. He believed that this was not possible without creating good will and understanding. The success he achieved in the publication of some theological books of the Shi'ah in Egypt by the Egyptians themselves, was one of the most important achievements of the Shi'ah scholars.

May Allah reward him for the services he rendered to the cause of Islam and the Muslims!

Anyhow, the advocacy of the thesis of Islamic unity does not demand that we should feel shy of telling the facts. What is to be avoided is to do any thing that may injure the feelings and sentiments of other parties. As for a scientific discussion, it relates to the domain of logic and reason, not to that of sentiments and feelings.

Fortunately in our times there have appeared a good number of Shi'ah scholars who are following this healthy policy, the most prominent of them being Ayatullah Sayyid Sharafuddin Amili, Ayatullah Kashiful Ghita and Ayatullah Shaykh Abdul Husayn Amini, the author of the prominent book, ***Al-Ghadir***.

The events of Imam Ali's life and the policy he pursued, which has now been practically forgotten and is rarely mentioned, provide a good example in this respect.

Imam Ali did not refrain from speaking of his right and claiming it, nor did he hesitate to complain against those who snatched it away from him. His keen interest in Islamic unity did

not prevent him from raising his voice frankly. His numerous sermons in Nahjul Balaghah are a testimony to this fact. But all his grievances did not impel him to leave the ranks of the Muslims struggling against their opponents. He took part in the Friday and other congregational prayers. He accepted his share of the booty of that time. He always gave sincere counsel to the Caliphs and was counted as one of their advisers.

During the war of the Muslims against the Iranians the Caliph then intended to take part in the fighting personally. Imam Ali said to him: *"Do not go to the front, for so long as you are in Madina, the enemy thinks that even if the whole Muslim army is wiped out, you will send reinforcement from the centre. But if you personally go to the battlefield, they will say: Here the mainstay of the Arabs is. And then they will concentrate all their forces to kill you, and if they kill you, the Muslims will be totally demoralized".* (See: Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 146)

That was the regular policy that Imam Ali pursued. But he never accepted any post under the Caliphs. He did not consent to be a military commander, the governor of a province, the Amir of Hajj, nor did he accept any other such appointment for its acceptance would have meant the renunciation of his own well-established claim. In other words, the acceptance of an official post would have been something more than mere cooperation and preservation of Islamic unity. Although he himself did not accept any post, he did not prevent his relatives and friends from accepting such posts, because that did not mean the endorsement of the Caliphate.

Imam Ali's behaviour in this respect was very graceful and a sign of his dedication to the Islamic objectives. While others divided, he united; while others tore apart, he patched up.

Abu Sufyan tried to take advantage of the displeasure of Imam Ali. He pretended to be a well-wisher of him and tried to wreak his own vengeance by showing respect to the Holy Prophet's legatee, but Imam Ali was shrewd enough not to be hoodwinked by him. He with his hand struck Abu Sufyan's chest as a sign of rejection of his offer and turned him away. (See Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 5)

Abu Sufyans and Hayy ibn Akhtabs are always busy with their evil designs. Hayy ibn Akhtabs' finger can be seen in many happenings. It is the duty of the Muslims, especially the Shi'ah to keep Imam Ali's traditions in this respect before their eyes and not to be deceived by Abu Sufyans and Hayy ibn Akhtabs.

These were the objections of those who oppose the question of leadership and this is our reply to them.

What is amazing is that some other people raise objections quite contrary to these objections. This group wants the question of Islamic leadership to become rather a regular pursuit. It wants this question to be discussed in season and out of season and repeated like a slogan. But

this group is not interested in its being dealt with in a scientific and instructive way. It wants to keep the feelings strained, but is not interested in satisfying intellectual quest or sharpening wits. And that is what the enemy wishes. Otherwise if the question is discussed in a learned manner, there is no reason why it should become a pursuit?

Imamat and Dialectic Logic

II. An Extract From Notes

Dialectic logic denies that society needs guidance or leadership, According to this logic at the most society needs an intellectual and leader to bring inequities, contradictions and inequalities existing in society to the consciousness of the masses so that dialectic movement may be initiated. As this movement is compulsive, the passage from thesis and anti-thesis to synthesis is unavoidable. Therefore society automatically traverses its course and in the end attains perfection.

The leaflet[24] - *Leadership, Imamat, Dialectic*, says: "One of the important questions concerning leadership and Imamat, especially the Islamic conception of Imamat is: What is the role of the so-called intellectual? Is his duty and responsibility merely to depict the inequities and inequalities, awaken the consciousness of the exploited classes and inculcate the existence of real class contradiction in the mind of the deprived masses? Is it true that once the masses become conscious of the existing contradictions, society moves forward - automatically and dialectically"

The fact is that above all other things society needs leadership, guidance and Imamat. Development is not the essential result of the contradictions. Development is not possible without guidance and leadership. Dr. Ali Shari'ati in the last pages of his booklet, *Wherefrom to Begin* has elaborately discussed this question under the heading, Responsibility and Mission of an Intellectual. He says: "Briefly the responsibility of an intellectual is to transmit the inequities within society to the self-consciousness of the people of that society. Then society performs its own movement."

Anyhow, after a few lines he makes some remarks, which are contrary to the above statement, and support society's need of guidance and leadership.

Dr. Shari'ati says: "It has been supposed that from the point of view of leadership an intellectual has no responsibility. Dialectic contradiction chooses its own way. An intellectual's duty is confined to portraying contradictions and rousing the underprivileged classes against the ruling classes.[25]" But only after a few lines he talks of "determining a solution and the common ideals of society and of inculcating zeal and a sense of common faith ...." These remarks are contrary to the theory that society performs its own movement. When Dr Shari'ati speaks of dialectic corollary of the triangle of thesis, anti-thesis and

synthesis and of compulsory development, he is consistent, but when he makes his subsequent remarks, he speaks against his own postulates.

Leadership and Protection of Faith

The scholastic theologians have greatly emphasized that Imam is the protector and preserver of faith and religion. Probably it is supposed that he protects religion in the same way as a building is first erected and then it is maintained and protected against a possible damage by rain, wind etc. Hence there appears to be no need that a building built by an unrivalled builder should be preserved by a person having almost the same degree of skill as the original builder. For example there has never been felt any need that there should exist some persons of the calibre of those who created the Masjid Shah, Ali Qapu, the dome of Masjid Shaykh Lutfullah, the Bayasanqari inscription of Masjid Gowhar Shad, the writings of Meer and Bayasanqar, the hand-written Qurans and other master-pieces.

But the fact is that a damage to religion is not a simple affair. According to psychological and sociological principle as soon as a revolutionary movement succeeds and the enemy despairs of continuing his face to face confrontation, he ceases to resist it openly and on the basis of his assessment of his own advantage, he sometimes even joins the movement, not because he has really been converted to it, but purely with a view to exploit its success. He utilizes the movement for his own ends without having faith in its spirit and objectives. That is what happened during the constitutional movement of Iran. The opponents of the constitutional government joined the movement, and pretended to be its staunch supporters. Ayanuddawlah and Sadr ul Ashraf became prime ministers of the constitutional government. Such people not only preserve the external features of the movement, but also try to furnish it with further adornments. Anyhow, they destroy its spirit, its reality and its core, and empty it from within. In the words of Imam Ali in this process, *"Islam is overturned as a pot is overturned."* (See Nahjul Balgha -- Sermon 103)Thus they divert the movement from its right course, preserving its shape and appearance but altering its content and nature. As most people are only superficial observers and prone to take things for their face value, they remain happy and satisfied, for they find the externalities safe to the utmost extent. They do not realize that the fundamentals have vanished. It is here that mature thinking and deep observation are required. When Imam Ali said: *"In every generation we have irreproachable successors who defend us against the deviation of the fanatics and the pretensions of the liars"*, he might have referred to the Holy Imams themselves or to the honest scholars who keep a watch on the people's belief in the Imams. It may be mentioned that struggle against innovations in religion is not confined to those cases in which a law is openly violated or something that has nothing to do with religion is intentionally introduced into religion. Sometimes people's way of thinking in regard to religion is so perverted that they begin to have aversion to right thinking. What we mean to emphasize is that there is no fear of any harm being incurred by Islam from outside the Muslim world. The Quran says: ***"Those who disbelieve have now despaired of doing any damage to your religion. Therefore do not fear them; but have fear of Me."*** But there exists a definite threat to Islam from inside. In this connection the greatest threat is posed not by

those who commit abominable sins out of lust etc., but by the hypocrisy of those who are afraid of opposing Islam openly. They wear a mask of Islam on their face and try to achieve their nefarious ends under the cover of Islamic way of life, a very heavy cover indeed. They devoid Islam of its content, leaving intact its shape and appearance by changing its courseand its goal and altering its meaning.[26] The simple-minded Muslims must be aware of the fraud of this group.

[24] Please refer to our footnote of the booklet, Wherefrom to Begin, page 39.

[25] In one of his footnotes on the booklet, Wherefrom to Begin, page 39.

[26] In his papers on "Alteration of the Quran" the author says that distortion of meaning indicates the retention of the wording of the Quran, but expounding it wrongly as, according to a well-known story Muawiyah did when he misinterpreted the wording of the prediction regarding the death of Ammar ibn Yasir. Another case of the distortion of meaning is the misinterpretation of the verse: "There is no hukm (decision, judgement) except by Allah." (Surah Yusuf 12: 90) On the basis of this verse the Khawarij raised the slogan: *La hukma illaillah* (There is no decision except by Allah). Commenting on this slogan Imam Ali said: *"Right words, wrong meaning"*. (See Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 40). This intentional or unintentional misinterpretation was disastrous and caused so much damage in the history of Islam. Another case is the misinterpretation of the tradition: "If you know (Allah), do whatever you like."

Profound Wisdom and Divine Justice

In connection with the Divine conception of the world several questions pertaining to the relation between Allah and the world, such as the transience and the eternity of the world, origin of the existing things and similar other questions are discussed in the science of divinity.

Anyhow, it is in the fitness of things that it may be mentioned here that the questions of profound wisdom of Allah and Divine justice are closely related to each other.

With reference to the question of profound Divine justice, it may be said that the existing system of the world is the most wise and judicious system. It is not only based on knowledge, consciousness and will but is also the most healthy and the best possible system. No better system is possible. The existing world is the most perfect.

Here a pertinent question arises. We observe that there are many phenomena of the world which may be described as defective, vicious, ugly or useless. Divine wisdom demands that perfectness instead of defectiveness, virtue instead of vice, beauty instead of ugliness and usefulness instead of futility should have prevailed. Genitive defects and malformations in the body of man and animals, natural calamities and misfortunes and repulsive and obnoxious scenes, all appear to be contrary to Divine wisdom. A system can be called just only if therein pain, distress and undue discrimination are not found and calamities and misfortunes do not exist. Annihilation and destruction should have no place in a just system, for it is unjust to debar a being from the enjoyment of perfect conditions after he has been brought into existence. If the present system of the world is just, then why do all these discriminations and deprivations exist? Why is it that one is white and another is black; one is ugly and another is beautiful; one is healthy and another is sick? Why has one been created a man and another a sheep, a scorpion or an earthworm? Why has one been created a devil and another an angel? Why have all not been created alike or in some other way different from what they are? For example, why has the one who is white, handsome or healthy not been created black, ugly or sick? These and similar other questions about the world appear to be puzzling. The monotheistic conception which considers the world to be a work of Allah, the wise and the absolutely just, must answer these questions.

In view of the fact that a detailed answer to these questions require a detailed and voluminous book and furthermore, we have dealt with this subject in our book, Divine Justice of which

several editions have appeared, here we content ourselves with mentioning some basic principles, the knowledge of which should facilitate the solution of this problem. After getting acquainted with these principles the reader will be able to draw his own conclusion.

(i) Principle of the self-Existence and Perfection of Allah

As Allah is absolutely self-existing and does not lack any excellence or ability, He does not do anything to achieve any object of His own or to make up any deficiency in Himself. His wisdom does not mean that he chooses the best goals and employs the best means to secure them. This sense of wisdom applies to man only and not to Allah. His wisdom means that He works to enable the existing things to reach the goal of their existence. He brings the non-existing things into existence and leads them to their inherent perfection. The questions and objections raised in this respect are partly due to the comparison of Allah to man. A person who questions as to the wisdom and the use of a particular creation, presumes that Allah like man does a thing to achieve some object and goal of His own. Most of the queries of the questioner would have automatically been answered if he had kept in mind from the beginning that what Allah does no doubt has some purpose, but Allah Himself has no aim or purpose of His own. The purpose of every creation is inherent in its own nature, to which Allah leads it.

(ii) Principle of Sequence

Existence is a Divine favour that pervades the entire universe. It has a special order. All existing things stand in an inexorable relation of precedence and posteriority and cause and effect to each other. No existing thing can move from its appointed position, nor can it occupy the place of something else. Existing things have varied grades of existence, and vastly differ from each other from the point of view of defectiveness and perfection and strength and weakness. This variation is an essential part of the grading of existence. It is no discrimination and cannot be considered to be contrary to justice or wisdom. Discrimination presupposes the existence of two beings of equal potentialities on one of which a favour is bestowed and from the other it is withheld. But where the disparity is due to any inherent deficiency, the question of discrimination does not arise.

(iii) Principle of Generality

There is another misunderstanding which is the result of man's comparing Allah with himself. A man takes a decision at a particular time, at a particular place and under particular circumstances. Suppose a man decides to build a house. In order to build it he joins together by artificial means a certain amount of bricks, mortar, cement and steel, which have no inherent link with each other. The final result is the construction of a house.

Does Allah also accomplish His work in the same way? Does His creation lie in the

combining and joining together of several things, having no connection with each other?

The creation of such artificial ties and bonds is the work of a created being like man, who himself is a part of the world system and can utilize within a limited scope only the forces and the qualities of the existing things. Man does not create a thing. He only produces a motion in an already existing thing.

Even the motion produced by him is forced and not natural. In contrast, Allah is the Creator of all things and all their forces and qualities.

Man makes use of fire and electric which already exist. He makes such an arrangement that he may use them when required, and in order to save himself from their harmful effects, may put them off when not required. In contrast, Allah is the Creator of fire, electricity and all their effects and qualities. Their very existence means that they should generate heat and motion and should burn. Allah has not created them for any particular person or for any particular occasion. Fire heats the hut of a poor person, but it also burns his clothes if they fall in it, because Allah has created it with the property of burning. If we look at fire in the context of the whole system of the world, we are bound to find it useful and necessary. It is immaterial whether in the case of any particular person or in a particular instance, it is beneficial or not.

In other words, in the case of Divine wisdom the ultimate object and purpose relates to the doing, not to the doer. Allah is wise in the sense that He has created the best system to enable the existing things to achieve objects for which they have been created. His wisdom does not mean that He has arranged the best means to make up His own deficiency, to give a practical shape to His potential ability or to achieve His own evolutionary objects. Further, we must remember that the Divine acts aim at securing general and not particular purposes. Fire has been created to burn in general. It has not been created to burn any particular thing on any particular occasion. Hence from the viewpoint of Divine wisdom it is immaterial whether it is beneficial or harmful in any individual case.

(iv) For the materialization of a reality it is not enough that Allah is All-Powerful and Beneficent. In order to come into being the thing concerned must have the capacity of receiving His favour. In many cases the incapacity of some of the existing things is the cause of their being deprived of some advantages and good points.. From the viewpoint of the general system and its connection with the Self-existing Being, the secret of the appearance of certain defects like ignorance and disabilities lies in the incompetence of those having such defects.

(v) As Allah is necessarily existing in regard to His essence, so He is in regard to all His attributes. Hence it is impossible that a thing be fit for existence and the conferment of existence on it be withheld by Him.

(vi) The evils and vices either mean the non-existence of a quality, as the case is with ignorance, disability and poverty, or they are bad because they cause destruction, as is the case with earthquakes, disease-causing germs, floods, hailstorms etc. The things which cause destruction, their mischief is relative and only in reference to other things. Anything bad is not bad in itself, but it is bad for something else. The true existence of everything is its own existence. Its relative existence is only conceptual and derivative, though an integral part of its real existence.

(vii) Good and bad are not the qualities independent of each other. The evil is an integral quality of the good. The evils and vices which indicate the non-existence of a quality represent the unfitness of a thing potentially fit. As soon as it becomes practically fit, Divine favour to it is inevitable. As for the evils-which do not constitute negative qualities, their root lies invariably in the good.

(viii) There exists no pure and unadulterated evil. Non-existence is a prelude to existence and perfection. Evils are a stage of evolution. It is true that every dark cloud has a silver lining.

(ix) **Laws and Norms:** This world is governed by a causation system, and as has been pointed out earlier, this system is based on universal laws and norms. The Holy Qur'an expressly confirms this fact.

(x) The world besides having an unexceptionable system, is in itself one indivisible unit and constitutes one single body. Hence evils are not separable from all that is good. The evils and nonexistences not only cannot be separated from virtues and existences, but they also form one single 'manifestation'.

On the basis of these ten principles, there are only two possibilities. Either the world should exist with its peculiar system or should not exist at all. It is not possible that the world should be existing, but it should not be having its peculiar system or it should be having some other system, in which, for example, the causes may take the place of the effects and the effects may take the place of the causes. Therefore what is possible from the viewpoint of profound Divine wisdom is that either the world should exist with its entire present system or nothing should exist at all. Evidently wisdom demands that existence should have preference over non-existence.

As the things cannot exist except with all their essential and inseparable qualities, it is unimaginable to think that virtues can be separated from evils or that non-existence can be separated from existence. From this point of view also Divine wisdom can either demand the existence of evils and virtues simultaneously or their non-existence altogether. It cannot require the existence of virtues and the non-existence of evils.

Also what is possible to exist is the entire world in the form of one unit. The existence of one

part of it and the nonexistence of another part of it is not feasible. Therefore from the viewpoint of Divine wisdom the question which may be considered is the existence or the non-existence of the whole of it, not of any part of it.

The above principles, if digested well, are enough to remove all doubts and difficulties concerning Divine wisdom and Divine justice. We again refer our readers to our book, Divine Justice and seek their indulgence for finding it necessary to raise here the questions which are of a level higher than that of this book.

In the end, in view of the fact that the question of Divine justice has a special history and is considered by the Shiah to be one of the articles of their faith, it will not be improper to touch briefly on its history also.

History of the Principle of Justice in Islamic Culture

The Shiah believe the doctrine of justice to be an article of their faith. In the preface of the Divine Justice, we have stated that the doctrine of justice has two aspects: Divine Justice and Human Justice. Divine Justice is again divided into two parts: (i) Creational and (ii) Legislative Human Justice.

Legislative Human Justice also has two phases: (i) Individual justice and (ii) Social Justice.

The justice which is considered to be the characteristic of the Shi'ah creed and is believed by the Shi'ah to be an article of their faith is Divine justice.

It is this justice which is an integral part of the Islamic conception of the world.

Divine justice means that Allah does no injustice and in both of His creational and law-making systems acts according to what is right and fair. The reason why the principle of justice became an article of faith among the Shi'ah was that a section of the Muslims denied it in a way that was totally contrary to human freedom. They denied the working of the principle of causation in the world system as well as human affairs, and maintained that Divine destiny operated direct and not through the media of cause and effect. According to them, fire did not burn. It was Allah who burnt it. Similarly a magnet had no role in attracting iron towards it. It was Allah who attracted iron to it. Man did not perform good or bad deeds. It was Allah who accomplished them direct through the agency of human beings.

Here an important question arises: If the system of causation did not exist and man had no power of choice, why should an individual be recompensed for evil or good done by him? Why does Allah reward some people and send them to Paradise and why does He punish some others and despatches them to Hell, when He Himself performs all good and bad deeds? If the human beings have no freedom and no choice of their own, it is unjust and contrary to

the indisputable principle of Divine justice to punish them for the deeds over which they have no control.

Most of the Shi'ah and a section of the Sunnis, known as the Mu'tazilah reject the theory of human compulsion and direct operation of Divine destiny in the world. They consider this view to be contrary to the principle of justice, and besides advancing arguments based on reason quote from the Holy Qur'an and the hadith in support of what they maintain. That is why they have come to be known as *'Adliyah*, that is the supporters of the justice.

From the above it is evident that notwithstanding the fact that the principle of justice is a Divine principle and is related to one of the attributes of Allah, it is also a human principle, because it equally concerns human freedom and power of choice. Therefore a belief in the principle of justice on the part of the Shiah and the Mutazilah means a belief in human freedom, human responsibility and the constructive role of man.

The question which often disturbs the minds in connection with Divine justice, especially during modern times, concerns certain cases of social inequality.

It is asked how is it that some individuals are ugly, while some others are handsome; some are healthy while some others have poor health; some are well-off and influential, while some others are poor and of little consequence?

Is this inequality not contrary to the principle of Divine justice? Does not Divine justice demand that all individuals should be equal in regard to wealth, duration of life, number of children, social position, fame and popularity, and there should be no disparity among them in regard to these things? Can the disparity in respect of these things be explained by any means other than believing in Divine destiny?

The root of this question lies in not paying attention to the way the Divine destiny operates. It appears that the questioner thinks that Divine destiny works direct and not through the medium of causes, and that health, beauty, power, position, popularity and other bounties of Allah are distributed to the people at their doorsteps by a hidden hand direct from the Divine treasures.

Enough attention has not been paid to the fact that no bounties, whether material or spiritual, are distributed direct. The Divine destiny has set up a system and appointed a number of laws and norms. Whosoever wants something he should seek it through that system and according to those laws.

Another cause of misunderstanding is that due attention is not paid to the position of man as a responsible being who makes struggle to improve the condition of his life, combats the natural factors and strives against social evils and human tyranny.

If there exist inequalities in human society and if there are some who have everything at their disposal and there are others whose lot is only to struggle for their subsistence every moment, the responsibility for this situation does not lie with Divine destiny. Man, who is free is himself responsible for the inequity.

Revelation and Prophethood

Universal Guidance

A belief in revelation and Prophethood emanates from a particular conception of the world and man, which involves a belief in the universality of Divine guidance. The principle of universal guidance is a part of the monotheistic conception of the world as presented by Islam. As Allah, the Almighty is a compulsorily self-existing in every respect and absolutely Beneficent, He extends His favour to every species of the existing things in accordance with its capability and guides it on its evolutionary journey. This guidance covers everything from the tiniest particle to the largest star and from the lowest lifeless existence to the highest living being known to us, that is man. That is why the Holy Qur'an has used the word revelation in connection with the guidance of inorganic material, plants and animals as it has used it in connection with the guidance of man.

No existing thing in this world is at rest. Everything is moving towards its goal. At the same time all indications show that everything is pushed to its goal by a mysterious force existing within it. It is this force that is called Divine guidance. The Holy Qur'an reports that Prophet Musa said to the Fir'awn of his time:

"Our Lord is He who gave everything its distinctive nature and then guided it." (Surah Ta Ha, 20:50)

Our world is a world of goals. Everything is being attracted to its evolutionary goal by an inner force, or Divine guidance.

The word wahi meaning revelation has been repeatedly used in the Holy Qur'an. The way how it has been used and the occasions on which it has been used, show that the Holy Qur'an does not consider the revelation to be confined to man. The Holy Qur'an believes it to be effective in the case of everything, at least in the case of all living beings. That is why it talks of revelation even to the bee. All that may be said is that revelation and guidance have degrees which vary in accordance with the degree of the evolution of the different things.

The highest degree of revelation is that which is made to the Prophets. This kind of revelation is based on man's need of Divine guidance so that he may proceed towards a goal beyond the

perceptible and material world, to which he must go in any case. In addition, revelation meets man's requirements in his social life which needs a Divinely sanctioned law. We have already explained man's need to an evolutionary ideology and his inability to frame such an ideology himself.

The Prophets are a sort of a receiving set in human form. They are chosen individuals capable of receiving guidance and knowledge from the invisible world. It is Allah alone who can judge who is fit to be a Prophet. The Holy Qur'an says.

"Allah knows best whom to entrust with His message." (Surah al-An'am, 6:124)

Though revelation is a phenomenon, which is beyond the purview of direct human perception and experiment, its impact can be felt, like the impact of many other forces, in the effects which it produces. Divine revelation produces a deep and tremendous impact on the personality of its recipient, that is the Prophet. It 'raises' the Prophet to truth. In other words, it. stimulates his talents and faculties and brings about a deep and big revolution in his person for the good of humanity. It endows him with an absolute conviction. History has not witnessed such a conviction as that of the Prophets and the persons produced by them.

Characteristics of Prophets

The Prophets who through revelation come in contact with the source of existence, have certain distinguishing characteristics to which we refer below:

(i) Miracles:

Every Prophet raised by Allah was endowed with a kind of supernatural power by means of which he worked one or more miracles to prove the truth and Divinity of his message and mission.

The Holy Qur'an calls the miracles wrought by the Prophets by the will of Allah, 'Ayat' that is the sign of Prophethood. The Holy Qur'an says that in every age the people have asked the Prophets of their time to work some miracles for them. The demand being reasonable and logical, the Prophets acceded to it, because otherwise it was not possible for those who sought truth, to acknowledge their Prophethood. Anyway the Prophets declined to accede to a request for a miracle if it was made with an intention other than seeking truth. For example, if an offer was made in the form of a bargain and the people said to a Prophet that they would embrace his faith only if he worked a particular miracle, their request was ignored. However, the Holy Qur'an has recounted many miracles of the Prophets, such as bringing the dead to life, curing the incurable, speaking in the cradle, turning a staff into a serpent, describing the unknown and foretelling future events.

(ii) Infallibility:

Another distinguishing feature of the Prophets is their infallibility, that is their immunity from committing a sin or making a mistake. The Prophets are not carried away by their personal desires. They do not err. Their infallibility is indisputable. But what does their infallibility actually mean? Does it mean that whenever they are about to commit a sin or to make a mistake, an angel comes and stops them in the same way as a father prevents his child from going astray?

Or does it mean that the Prophets have been created in such a way that they are incapable of doing anything wrong just like an angel who, for example, cannot commit adultery for he has no sexual desire, or like a machine, which makes no mistake because it has no brain?

Or is it that the reason why the Prophets do not sin nor do they err is that they have been endowed with a particular degree of intuition, faith and conviction?

Yes, that is the only right explanation. Now let us take up each of these two kinds of immunity separately.

Immunity from Sins:

Man is a free being. He himself determines what is beneficial to him and what is harmful, and on that basis he decides what he should do. His judgement plays an important role in his choice. It is impossible that he should choose to do a thing which according to his judgement is rather harmful to him than beneficial. For example a sensible man interested in his life would never throw himself down from a hilltop nor would take a lethal poison.

Individuals vary from the viewpoint of the strength of their faith and the extent of their consciousness of the consequences of a sin. The stronger their faith and the keener their consciousness, the less sins they will commit. Should the faith of a man be so strong that while committing a sin he feels as if he was throwing himself down from the top of a hill, the chance of his sinning will be nil. We call this state infallibility. Here infallibility originates from the perfection of faith and piety. To be infallible and immune, man does not require an external force to restrain him from committing sins, nor is there any need of his being powerless by nature. Not to commit a sin is not commendable if a man is unable to commit it, or is prevented from committing it by an external force. The position of a man who is unable to commit a sin is similar to that of a prisoner who is unable to commit a fraud. Naturally a prisoner cannot be described as an honest and upright man.

Immunity of the Prophets from sins and errors is an outcome of their intuition. A mistake occurs when a man comes into contact with a reality through his internal and external senses and forms some mental pictures of it which he analyses with the help of his mental faculties.

In that case he may make a mistake in arranging his mental pictures or applying them to the external reality. But when he comprehends an external reality direct through a special sense, having no need of forming any mental picture of it, and his very apprehension of a reality means his direct contact with it, the question of making any mistake does not arise. The Prophets have, a contact with the realities of the world from within themselves. Naturally no mistake can be imagined to exist in a reality itself. For example, if we put 100 rosary beads in a receptacle, then put another 100 beads in it and repeat this act 100 times, we may not be able to keep the count correctly and may not be sure whether we have repeated the action 100 times, 99 times or 101 times. But the actual reality cannot be different from what it is. Though the action has been repeated 100 times, the actual number of the beads can neither be less nor more than what it is. The men who are in the midst of reality and close to the root of existence are immune from making any kind of mistake. They are infallible.

Difference Between Prophets and Geniuses

From here the difference between the Prophets and the geniuses also becomes clear. The geniuses are the persons of exalted intellectual power and extraordinary understanding. They work on their own mental data and arrive at a conclusion by means of their intellectual power. They sometimes make mistakes in their calculations. The Prophets besides being blessed with their intellectual and calculating powers, are equipped with an additional power called revelation, which the geniuses lack. Hence there can be no comparison between the geniuses and the Prophets. They belong to two different categories. We can make a comparison between the seeing or the hearing power of two persons, but we cannot compare one man's seeing power with another man's hearing power and say which is stronger. The geniuses have an extraordinary thinking power, whereas the Prophets have quite a different power called revelation. They maintain a close contact with the Source of existence. Therefore it is wrong to draw a comparison between the two.

(iii) Guidance:

The Prophethood begins with a spiritual journey from the creation to Allah and gain proximity to Him, which implies turning away from the externality to the internality. Anyhow, eventually it ends by the Prophet's returning to the people with a view to reforming human life and guiding it to the right path.

In Arabic there are two words for the Prophet, Nabi and Rasul. The first literally means a bringer of news and the second a messenger.

A Prophet conveys the message of Allah to the people and awakens and organizes their dormant powers. He invites them to Allah and to all that pleases Him, namely peace, cordiality, reformation, non-violence, veracity, uprightness, justice, emancipation from everything ungodly, love and all other virtues. A Prophet delivers humanity from the shackles

of submission to base desires and false gods.

Dr. Iqbal describing the difference between the Prophets and all other individuals having 'unitary experience' says: "The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of his 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final; for the Prophet it is the awakening within him and the unleashing psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world." (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 124).

(iv) Sincerity of Purpose:

As the Prophets have a trust in Allah and are never oblivious of the mission entrusted to them by Him, they accomplish their duty with utmost sincerity. They have no aim other than the guidance of humanity as ordered by Allah, and ask for no remuneration for the performance of their mission.

The Holy Qur'an in Surah ash-Shu'ara has summed up what many of the Prophets said to their peoples. Of course every Prophet had a message for his people which was suited to the problems they faced. Anyhow there was a point which was revealed in the message of every Prophet. Each of them said: "I want no remuneration or wages from you". Therefore sincerity is one of the distinguishing features of Prophethood; and that is why the message of the Prophets has always been so firm.

As the Prophets felt that they had been 'raised' and they did not entertain the least doubt about the fact that they had been entrusted with an essential and useful mission, preached their message and defended it with unprecedented firmness and utmost conviction.

When Prophet Musa and his brother, Harun went to Fir'awn, they had no appurtenances with them except the woolen clothes on their body and their wooden staffs in their hands. They asked Fir'awn to accept their message and told him firmly that if he would accept it, his honour would be safeguarded, otherwise he would lose his government. Fir'awn was stunned by what they said.

In the early days of his Prophethood when the number of the Muslims did not exceed that of the fingers of the two hands, the Holy Prophet of Islam one day, known in history as the Day of the Warning, assembled elders of the Bani Hashim, conveyed his message to them and firmly and expressly told them that his religion was going to spread throughout the world and that it was in their own interest to embrace it. To them these words were unbelievable. They looked at each other with wide open eyes and dispersed without uttering a word.

When his uncle, Abu Talib conveyed to him the message of the Quraysh, saying that they were willing to select him their king, to give to him in marriage the most beautiful daughter of the tribe and make him the most wealthy member of their society, provided he gave up his preachings, the Holy Prophet said in reply that he was not going to budge an inch from his sacred mission even if they put the sun in one of his hands and the moon in the other.

Just as infallibility is a necessary outcome of a Prophet's communication with Allah, similarly sincerity and firmness are also the essential characteristics of Prophethood.

(v) Constructiveness:

The Prophets harness all the forces at their disposal and set them in motion for constructive purposes, that is to reform both the individual and society or in other words, to ensure human welfare. It is impossible that their activities should corrupt any individual or cause harm to society at large. Therefore if the preachings of a claimant of Prophethood lead to corruption or indecency, paralyze human power or cause decline of society, that is clear proof of his being an imposter. Dr Iqbal in this connection has very aptly said: "Another way of judging the value of a Prophet's religious experience would be to examine the type of manhood that he has created, and the cultural world that has sprung out of the spirit of his message". (The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam, p. 124)

(vi) Struggle and Conflict:

His struggle against idolatry, myths, ignorance, false ideas and tyranny is another sign of the truth of a Prophet. It is impossible that in the message of a person selected by Allah to be His Prophet there should be anything smacking of idolatry, supporting tyranny and injustice or tolerating polytheism, ignorance, myths, cruelty or despotism.

Monotheism, reason and justice are some of the principles which have been preached by all the Prophets. The message of only those who preach these principles is worth consideration and they alone can be asked to produce a proof or a miracle. If the message preached by a person contains an element indisputably unreasonable or contrary to the principles of monotheism and justice, or supporting tyranny, then it is not worth consideration at all. In such a case it is absolutely unnecessary to ask him to produce a proof of his claim. Similar is the case of a pretender, who commits a sin, makes a blunder or is unable to guide people because of a physical defect or some loathsome disease like leprosy, or because his teachings do not have constructive effect on human life. Even if such a pretender works miracles, it is absurd to follow him.

(vii) Human Aspect:

The Prophets, in spite of having many supernatural qualities, such as infallibility, the power

of working miracles, the incomparable power of guidance, and reconstruction and the power of making unique struggle against polytheism, myths and tyranny, are after all human beings. They, like all other men eat, sleep, walk, beget and eventually die. They are subject to all essential human needs. They are obligated to perform the same religious duties as others. They like others are subject to all the religious laws conveyed through them. Sometimes they have even some additional duties. The pre-dawn prayers which are supererogatory for others were obligatory for the Holy Prophet. The Prophets never considered themselves to be exempted from any religious injunctions. They, more than others had fear of Allah and they more than others worshipped Him. They offered prayers; kept fast; took part in the holy war; paid zakat and showed kindness to others. The Prophets worked hard for their own weal as well as the weal for the others. They were never a burden on anyone else in their life.

The revelation and the features connected with it constitute the only difference between the Prophets and others. The fact that they receive revelation does not exclude them from the category of human being. On the other hand it makes them a model of the perfect man. That is the reason why they are so fit to guide others.

(viii) Prophets Having A Divine Legal Code:

Generally speaking, the Prophets can be divided into two categories: The first category, which is in minority, is composed of those Prophets to whom independent codes of law were revealed, and who were ordered to guide the people on the basis of these codes. The Holy Qur'an has termed them the 'high-minded' Prophets. We do not know their number exactly. The Holy Qur'an expressly says that it has recounted the stories of only a few of the Prophets. Had it recounted the stories of all of them or at least had stated that it had recounted the stories of all those who were important among them, we might have known the number of the high-minded Prophets. Anyhow, we know that Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and Muhammad, the last Prophet (Peace be on them) are included among them. Independent codes of law were revealed to all 'high-minded' Prophets, who were asked to train their followers on the basis of them.

The second category of the Prophets consists of those who had not their own independent codes of law but were asked to preach and propagate the already existing Divine laws. Most of the Prophets belong to this category which includes such names as those of Hud, Salih, Lut, Ishaq, Yaqub, Yusuf, Yushu, Shuayb, Harun, Zachariyyah and Yahya (may peace be upon them).

Historical Role of the Prophet

Have the Prophets any positive or negative role in the movement of history? If they have, what is that? Is it positive or negative?

Even the anti-religious people admit that the Prophets have had an effective role in history. In the past they represented a great source of national power. In olden days the national power, was distinguished from blood relationships, tribal affinities and patriotic feelings or from religious tendencies and doctrinal bonds. The tribal heads and the national chiefs represented the first tendency and the Prophets and religious leaders the second. There are no two opinions about the fact that the Prophets constituted a force because of their religious influence. Anyhow, there are several views as to how this force worked:

(i) A section of people in their writings generally argue that as the Prophets had a spiritual and anti-temporal outlook, their role has been negative. These people hold that the central point of the teachings of the Prophets has been the renunciation of this world, concentration on the next, and introspection and escape from the external realities. That is why the force of religion and the Prophets, who have been a symbol of this force, have always discouraged people from taking interest in the worldly life and have applied a brake to progress. Thus the role of the Prophets has always been negative in history. This is the view which is expressed generally by those who claim to be broad-minded.

(ii)There is another section of people, who also maintain that the religious people have played a negative role, but the argument advanced by them is quite different. They maintain that the religious people are actually worldly-oriented and their spiritual orientation is merely a disguise to deceive the simple-minded. The efforts of the religious people have always been, directed toward securing the interests of the oppressors and, beguiling the oppressed. They have endeavoured to maintain the status quo, and opposed the evolution of society. The supporters of this view say that history like any other phenomenon has a dialectical movement, which originates from its internal contradiction. With the emergence of proprietorship society was divided into two conflicting classes, one of them being the ruling and exploiting class and the other the deprived and exploited. With a view to protect its own special position the ruling class has always been anxious to maintain the existing situation and in spite of the inevitable development of production implements has wanted to keep society as it is. But the subjugated class in consonance with the development of the production implements wants to change the existing situation and to replace it with a more developed

one. The ruling class has used various tactics, and to achieve its nefarious ends has employed the three factors of force, wealth and deceit. In this game the role of the man of religion has been to hoodwink the people in the interest of the tyrants and exploiters. The people of religion have not been seriously interested in the Hereafter. Their pretention of godliness is only a disguise to conceal their worldliness and is intended to divert the attention of the underprivileged and the revolutionaries. Thus the role of the men of religion has always been negative for they have always supported the wealthy and the powerful people interested in maintaining the existing institutions. This is the theory put forward by the Marxists to explain historical development. According to Marxism the three factors of religion, government and wealth are coeval with private property and all over history have played a role against the interests of the masses.

(iii) Some other people interpret history in a way different from that of the Marxists. Anyhow they too consider the role of religion and the Prophets to be negative. They hold that the law of natural evolution and the law of the development of history are based on the domination of the strong and the elimination of the weak. The strong have contributed and are contributing to the progress of history, whereas the weak have been and are responsible for its stagnation and decline. Religion has been invented by the weak to apply a brake to the strong. The proponents of religions have invented such slavish moral conceptions as justice, freedom, virtue, love, compassion, cooperation etc. They did so in the interest of the weak, that is the lower classes and to the disadvantage of the strong, that is the upper classes which bring about progress and development. The people of religion brought the psychological forces of the strong under their control and prevented the elimination of the weak. Thus they have hampered the improvement of human race and the birth of the heroes. Therefore the role of religion and the Prophets who represent it has been negative, because they have supported the slavish mentality against the masterly qualities which contribute to the advancement of history and society. This is the view of the German philosopher, Nietzsche.

(iv) Besides the above mentioned three groups, there are others which also include some anti-religious people. They admit that the role of the Prophets in the past has been positive and fruitful and contributed to the progress of history. These groups give due consideration to the social and moral content of the teachings of the Prophets and to the historical events connected therewith. They admit that in the past the Prophets played the most fundamental role in the reform, welfare and progress of their society. Human culture has two aspects: Material and Spiritual. The material aspect of culture is its technical and industrial aspect which has continued to develop in every age till today. Its spiritual aspect concerns the mutual relations of the human beings, for the correct determination of which humanity is indebted to the teachings of the Prophets. As it is under the shadow of the spiritual aspect of culture that its material aspect gets an opportunity to grow and develop on correct lines, the role of the Prophets in the development of the spiritual aspect of civilization is direct and in the development of its material aspect indirect. According to these groups there can be no doubt about the positive role of the teachings of the Prophets in the past.

Anyhow some of these groups are of the opinion that the time of the positive role of the teachings of the Prophets is now over. They assert that with the advancement of science the religious teachings have lost their validity a great deal and in future also they will continue to lose their vitality. In contrast certain other groups hold that the role of faith and religious ideology can never be replaced by science, howsoever progress it may make. Science will always be as unable to replace religion as philosophical schools have been. The Prophets have had various roles in the past. It is true that there are certain cases in which the collective human conscience is no longer in need of a religious support. But the most fundamental roles performed by the Prophets are those which will be as much required in future as they were in the past. Here are some instances in which the teachings of the Prophets have influenced historical development

(i) Education:

In the past education had a religious motive, and it was this motive which encouraged the teachers and the parents. With the development of social conscience the need of religious motive has been eliminated in this field.

(ii) Affirmation of Agreements and Covenants:

Social life of man stands on the respect of the treaties, covenants and agreements and on abiding by the promises and undertakings. Respect of the agreements and promises is one of the mainstays of the human aspects of culture. To ensure this respect is a role which religion has always shouldered and for which no replacement has been found till today. Will Durant, an atheist, as he is, admits this fact in his book, Lessons from History. He says: "Religion with the help of its rituals has conferred the reverence of man-God relations on human compacts and in this way has brought about constancy and firmness to them".

On the whole religion has provided a strong support to the moral and human values. Moral values minus religion are like currency notes having no financial backing. Such notes soon lose their value.

(iii) Emancipation from Social Bondage:

The role of the Prophets in the fight against despotism, tyranny and all aspects of oppression and persecution is the most basic. The Holy Qur'an lays stress on this role of the Prophets. It describes the establishment of justice as the main object of their being raised. The Holy Qur'an again and again recounts the stories of the conflict between the Prophets and the representatives of despotism. In a number of verses it has expressly mentioned that those who constantly opposed the Prophets belonged to this class.

The view expressed by Marx and his followers to the effect that religion, government and

wealth are the three facts of the coercion of the ruling class against the underprivileged and the oppressed, is nothing but humbug. It is contrary to the indisputable historical facts. Explaining the view of Marx, Dr Arani says: "Religion has always been a tool in the hands of the dominating ruling class of society. In order to overpower the suppressed classes the rosary and cross always move side by side with the bayonet".

To be able to accept such an interpretation of history one will have to shut his eyes and overlook the historical facts. Imam Ali is the champion of the sword and the rosary both. He is a swordsman as well as a man of rosary. But he did not use them to suppress the underprivileged. His motto was: *"Oppose the oppressor and help the oppressed"*.

Throughout his life Imam Ali was a votary of the sword against those who possessed pelf and power. As Dr Ali al-Wardi has pointed out in his book, Comedy of Human Intellect, Imam Ali with his personality has refuted the philosophy of Marx.

The view of Nietzsche, which is diametrically opposed to that of Marx, is even more absurd. According to him, religion is a factor of stagnation and decline because it supports the weak while it is the powerful who form the most progressive class responsible for the development of society. It appears that in the opinion of Nietzsche human society makes speedy progress only when it is governed by the law of jungle. According to Marx the underprivileged people are the factor of development and the Prophets were against this class. But Nietzsche thinks that powerful are the factor of development and the Prophets opposed them. Marx says that religion is an invention of the powerful and the wealthy. Nietzsche, on the other hand maintains that it is an invention of the weak and the underprivileged. Evidently Marx was wrong on several counts. Firstly he interpreted history merely on the basis of the contradiction of class interests, and overlooked its human aspect. Secondly he regarded the underprivileged alone as the factor of development. Thirdly he considered the Prophets to be the supporters of the ruling class. As for Nietzsche, he has made the mistake of regarding the factor of force as the factor of the development of history in the sense that he has equated the more powerful man with the superior man and has believed that the more powerful man alone is the factor that carried history forward.

The Object of Prophethood

As now the role of the Prophets in the development of history has been made clear to a certain extent, we take up another question. The question is: What is the main object or the final goal for which the Prophets were raised and the Divine Books sent down?

In general terms it may be said that the main object is the guidance, salvation, well-being and prosperity of people.

There is no doubt that the Prophets were raised for guiding people to the straight path and saving their souls. But that is not the point. The point is to what final goal this straight path leads. What does the well-being of people imply according to the school of the Prophets? From what restraints and impediments does this school want to deliver man? What constitutes the ultimate good and prosperity according to it?

The Holy Qur'an in a number of verses has either expressly dealt with this subject or has hinted at it. It has mentioned two definite points which constitute the ultimate object of Prophethood, while the teachings of the Prophets are a prelude to them. These points are:

(i) The acknowledgement of Allah and coming close to Him and

(ii) The establishment of justice and fairplay in human society.

The Holy Qur'an says: **"Prophet, We have surely sent you as a witness, a bringer of good tidings, a warner, a summoner to Allah by His permission and as a lamp that gives light."** (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:45 - 46)

It is evident that out of all the qualities mentioned in this verse, the only quality which is fit to be considered the main object is that of summoning to Allah.

The Holy Qur'an in respect of the Prophets says: **"We surely sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and revealed on them the Book and the criterion (to judge what is right and what is wrong) so that people may establish justice."** (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25)

This verse expressly describes the establishment of justice as an object of raising the Prophets.

Summoning people to acknowledge Allah and to come close to Him implies preaching the theoretical and individualistic form of practical monotheism, and to establish justice and fairplay in society implies establishing practical monotheism on social level.

Now the question arises whether the main object of the coming of the Prophets is the acknowledgement of Allah, and all other things including the establishment of social justice are a prelude to it, or the main object is the establishment of social justice and the acknowledgement and worship of Allah are the means of the realization of that idea? If we use the same terminology as used by us earlier, we can thus recast this question: Is the main object theoretical monotheism and practical monotheism on individual level or is it practical monotheism on social level? Several answers have been given to this question:

(i) From the viewpoint of the object, the Prophets were dualists. In other words their object was two fold. One of their objects concerned the next worldly life and human success in the Hereafter (theoretical monotheism and practical monotheism on individual level). The other object concerned human success in this world (social monotheism). In order to ensure the prosperity of mankind in this world the Prophets preached social monotheism and to ensure human well-being in the next world they preached theoretical monotheism and practical monotheism on individual level, which is purely a spiritual and intellectual matter.

(ii) Another view is that the main object of the Prophets is social monotheism. Theoretical monotheism and practical monotheism on individual level are essential preliminaries to it. Theoretical monotheism concerns the acknowledgement of Allah. Man as such is in no need of acknowledging Him. It is immaterial for man whether the force motivating his spirit is Allah or thousands of other things. Similarly it makes no difference to Allah whether man acknowledges Him or does not acknowledge, worships Him or does not worship. Anyhow perfection of man depends on his adherence to collective monotheism, which in its turn cannot be achieved without the materialization of theoretical monotheism and practical monotheism on individual level. Allah has enjoined on man to acknowledge Him and worship Him so that collective monotheism may take a practical shape.

(iii) The third view is that the main object is the acknowledgement of Allah and coming near to Him. Social monotheism is the means of achieving this noble object. As we mentioned earlier, according to the monotheistic conception of the world its nature is 'from Him' 'to Him'. Hence man's perfection lies in going to Him and gaining His nearness. Man has one special distinction. Allah has said: **"I have breathed into him My spirit."** (Surah al-Hijr, 15:29)

As such man's, reality is Divine. By nature he seeks Allah. His well-being, evolution, safety and prosperity all lie in the acknowledgement and worship of Allah and in making an advancement towards Him. The Prophets have undertaken to establish justice and to do away with tyranny and discrimination, because man being social by nature, we can have no

conception of him apart from society. He cannot strive to seek proximity to Allah also, if a just system does not prevail in society. In fact such social values as justice, freedom, equality and democracy and such moral qualities as generosity, forgiveness, love and charity have no intrinsic value of their own. They in themselves are not the qualities denoting human excellence. They are simply the means of gaining excellence and perfection, not the ends. They pave the way for prosperity and salvation but do not constitute salvation.

(iv) The fourth theory is similar to the third one in so far as according it also the goal or the highest degree of excellence not only of man but of every existing thing is to move towards Allah. But according to it, it is polytheistic to assert that the Prophets have had a twofold object. Similarly it is a materialistic idea to say that the ultimate object of the Prophets is this worldly prosperity, which is nothing but the enjoyment of the gifts of nature in an atmosphere of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Anyhow, according to this theory, though social and moral values are only a means of reaching the real value, that is the acknowledgement of Allah and His worship, they do not totally lack an intrinsic value of their own.

The relationship between a preliminary and the main object is of two kinds. In certain cases the preliminary serves only as a prelude and after the object is achieved, its existence or nonexistence becomes immaterial. For example, a man wants to cross a water channel and for that purpose he puts a stone in the middle of it. Evidently after he has crossed the channel, the existence or the non-existence of that stone is of no importance to him. The same is the case with the ladder used to climb to a roof and the mark-sheet of a class for the purpose of promotion to the next higher class. In some other cases a preliminary does not lose its value even after the main object has been achieved. Even after the realization of the main object, its existence still remains necessary. For example, the information which is acquired by a student in class I and class II is still required by him when he reaches a higher class. He cannot afford to forget all that he had learnt in these classes. He can continue to be in a higher class only if he retains the knowledge that he acquired in these lower classes.

The explanation is that in some cases a preliminary is a lower stage of the object itself, whereas in some other cases it is not. A ladder is not a stage of getting to the roof. Similarly a stone put in the middle of a channel is not a stage of crossing it. But the knowledge gained in lower classes and the knowledge to be gained in higher classes are the various stages of the same reality.

The relation between the moral and social values on the one hand and the acknowledgement and worship of Allah on the other is of the second type. A man who acknowledges Allah and worships Him cannot afford to be indifferent to honesty, righteousness, justice, charity, sincerity, munificence and forgiveness. All high and noble moral qualities are Divine.

There is a hadith which says: "Adopt the moral qualities of Allah". In fact the noble moral qualities are a part of the acknowledgement and worship of the Divine Being, for their

adoption emanates from an inherent desire to have Divine attributes, though man may not be conscious of that fact. That is why according to Islamic teachings the good deeds of even the polytheists will not go in vain in the next world if they have such noble qualities as justice, generosity, philanthropy etc. They will be recompensed in some way or other provided their disbelief is not due to stubbornness. In fact such people attain a degree of godliness unconsciously.

Religion or Religions

The scholars of divinity and the writers on the history of religion usually discuss their subject under the heading of religions. For example, they talk of Prophet Ibrahim's religion, the Jewish religion, the Christian religion and the religion of Islam. They regard every Prophet to whom a code of law was revealed as the founder of a separate religion.

But the Holy Qur'an has its own terminology and its own style. From its point of view there has been only one Divine religion from the beginning to the end. All Prophets irrespective of the fact whether they had or had not an independent code of law, had the same mission and preached the same message. Their basic principles called religion were the same. Their teachings differed only in rules and subsidiary matters of secondary importance which varied according to the requirements of the time, the peculiarities of the environment and the characteristics of the people whom these Prophets addressed. But in spite of the difference in the form of their teachings, all Prophets visualized one single goal. Apart from the difference of form there was a difference of level also. The Prophets who came later, their teachings were of a higher level in keeping with the stage of the human development. For example, there is a vast difference in the level of the teachings of Islam and those of the earlier Prophets in respect of the genesis of man, the Hereafter and the conception of the world. In other words man vis-a-vis the teachings of the Prophets is like a student who is brought up step by step from class I to the highest class. This process signifies the development of religion, not the difference of religions. The Holy Qur'an has nowhere here used the word religion in a plural form. From the point of view of the Holy Qur'an what has existed is the religion, not the religions. There exists one big difference between the Prophets and the great philosophers and other outstanding social leaders. Each eminent philosopher has had his own school. That is why so many schools of philosophy have always existed in the world. In contrast, the Prophets have always corroborated and never contradicted each other. Had any one of the Prophets lived in the time and environment of another Prophet, he would have preached the rules of law and conduct similar to those preached by the latter.

The Holy Qur'an declares expressly that all Prophets form one single series. The earlier Prophets foretold about the later ones, and the latter Prophets acknowledged the earlier ones. The Holy Qur'a'n also says that Allah made a covenant with the Prophets to the effect that they would believe in each other and help each other. It says:

"When Allah made the covenant with the Prophets, He said. 'Here are the Scripture and

the wisdom which I have given you. Later a Prophet will come to you confirming what you possess. You shall believe in Him and you shall help him. He then said: 'Do you agree to this and take the responsibility I placed on you?' They answered: 'We agree. He said: 'Then bear witness and I will bear witness with you." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:81)

The Holy Quran calls the Divine religion Islam and described it as a continuous process from Adam to the last Prophet. This does not mean that the Divine religion has always been known by this name. What is meant is that Islam is the best word to describe the nature of this religion. That is why the Holy Qur'an says: **"There is no doubt that the only true faith in Allah's sight is Islam."** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:19)

At another place the Holy Qur'an says: **"Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was upright in faith and a Muslim"** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:67)

BACK Chapter 16 NEXT

Finality of Prophethood

We have said that despite the differences in details all Prophets have delivered the same message and belonged to the same ideological school. The principles and teachings of this school were explained to human society gradually in proportion to its development till the humanity reached the stage when the entire teachings in a comprehensive form were presented. At this point Prophethood came to an end. The Holy Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah (Peace be on him and his progeny) was the person through whom the complete ideology was conveyed, and the Holy Qur'an was the last celestial Book. The Holy Qur'an itself says: **"In truth and justice has been perfected the word of your Lord. None can change His words."** (Surah al-An'am, 6:115)

Now let us see why in the past the Prophethood was renewed from time to time and so many Prophets were raised in succession, though most of them were not given a new and independent code of law and were sent to promulgate then existing code? Why did this procedure come to an end with the last Prophet since whose time no Prophet, neither a law-giving one nor a preaching one has come, nor will ever come? Here we touch upon the reasons briefly.

Reasons of the Renewal of Prophethood

Though Prophethood is one continuous process and the Divine message, as the religion is not more than one reality, the reasons of the appearance of so many law-giving and preaching Prophets in succession and the termination of Prophethood after the advent of the last Prophet are as under:

Firstly the ancient man because of his intellectual immaturity was unable to preserve his celestial Book. Usually the Divine Books were either altered and corrupted or were lost totally. Therefore it was necessary that the message should be renewed from time to time. The revelation of the Holy Qur'an corresponded with a period when humanity had passed the period of its childhood and had become able to preserve its intellectual heritage. That is why there could be no alteration in the last Divine and Holy Book. The Muslims committed to memory and recorded in writing every verse of it as it was revealed, and did away with every possibility of addition, omission or alteration in it. Thus one of the reasons of the renewal of Prophethood disappeared.

Secondly, humanity being immature, it was not previously competent enough to have a comprehensive plan for its guidance, and hence it was necessary that it should be guided by the Prophets piecemeal and step by step.

Anyhow, by the period of the final Prophethood humanity had developed to the extent that it was able to have a comprehensive plan of conduct and it was no longer necessary that it should receive guidance stage by stage. Besides the extinction of the old celestial Books and the alteration in them, another reason for the continual renewal of Prophethood was that man in olden days was not able to receive a comprehensive plan. When his ability sufficiently developed, a comprehensive scheme was put at his disposal and this reason of the renewal of Prophethood also disappeared. Now the Muslim scholars who were specialists in this field, can guide the Muslims in the light of this scheme and can frame the rules and procedures for them to suit every occasion.

Thirdly, the overwhelming majority of the Prophets consisted of the preaching and not the law-giving Prophets. The number of the law-giving Prophets did not exceed the number of the fingers of one hand. The task of the preaching Prophets was to propagate, interpret and promulgate the religious law prevailing during their time. Now the religious scholars of the age of the finality of Prophethood, which is the age of knowledge, are capable of applying the general principles of Islam to the requirements of the time and place and deducing the rules of religious laws. This process is called ijtihad. The outstanding Muslim divines in this way perform many duties of the preaching Prophets and some of those even of the law-giving Prophet without being the law-givers themselves. They guide the Muslim Ummah. Thus, though the need of religion still exists and is expected to be ever increasing with the further cultural development of humanity, the need of the new Prophets and the new revealed Books has ceased to exist. And hence Prophethood has come to an end with the final Prophet.

It is clear from what has been mentioned that intellectual and social maturity of mankind has played a big role in the finality of Prophethood in several ways:

(i) It has enabled man to keep his celestial Book unaltered.

(ii) It has enabled him to receive his evolutionary programme all at once and not by stages.

(iii) It has enabled him to undertake the task of preaching and propagating religion, to set up religious institutions, to exhort people to do what is good and to restrain them from what is evil. Thus there is no longer any need of preaching Prophets who used to preach and propagate the teachings of the law-giving Prophets. This need is now being adequately fulfilled by the religious scholars and Divines.

(iv) From the viewpoint of mental development man has now reached a stage that in pursuance of his ijtihad he can interpret the revealed words and can apply the relevant

principles to all the changing circumstances. This task is also being performed by the religious scholars.

It is evident that the finality of Prophethood does not mean that man is no longer in need of Divine teachings received through revelation. Prophethood has not come to an end because as the result of his mental development man is now able to dispense with religion.

The eminent scholar and great Muslim thinker, Dr Iqbal, in spite of his extraordinarily intelligent discussions of the Islamic questions by which we have personally been greatly benefited and of which we have made use in this and other books, has been involved in a great misunderstanding while explaining the philosophy of the finality of Prophethood. He has based his conclusions on certain points, which we mention below, point by point:

(i) The word 'wahi' (revelation) which literally means 'to whisper', has been used by the Holy Quran in an expanded sense to include every kind of inspired guidance whether its recipient be inorganic material, plants, animals or man. He says: "This contact with the root of his own being is by no means peculiar to man. Indeed the way in which the word 'wahi' is used in the Holy Qur'an shows that the Holy Qur'an regards it as a universal property of life, though its nature and character are different at different stages of the evolution of life. The plant growing freely in space, the animal developing a new organ to suit a new environment, and a human being receiving light from the inner depths of life, are all cases of inspiration varying in character according to the needs of the recipient, or the needs of the species to which the recipient belongs". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 125)

(ii) Wahi or revelation is a sort of instinct and the guidance by means of revelations is a sort of instinctive guidance.

(iii) Wahi is a guidance from collective point of view. Human society being a moving unit and subject to the laws of motion, is definitely in need of guidance. The Prophet is just like a receiving set which instinctively receives what is required by mankind in this respect. Dr Iqbal says: "The world-life intuitively sees its own needs and at critical moments defines its own direction. This is what, in the language of religion, we call Prophetic revelation". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 147)

(iv) In their primitive stages the living beings are guided by their instinct. As they go to the higher stages of evolution and their faculties of feeling, imagination and thinking develop, the power of instinct is reduced and is replaced by feeling and thinking Power. Thus the insects have the most numerous and the strongest instincts and man the weakest and the smallest in number.

(v) From sociological point of view human society is passing through an evolutionary process, Just as the animals in their primary stages have been in need of instinct and have

gradually developed their faculties of feeling and imagination, and in certain cases of thinking also, and their instinctive guidance has been replaced by the guidance through feeling and imagination, similarly man in his evolutionary process has gradually reached a stage in which his rationality has so developed that his instinctive power (wahi or inspiration) has weakened. Dr Iqbal says: "During the minority of mankind psychic energy develops what I call Prophetic consciousness - a mode of economizing individual thought and choice by providing ready-made judgements, choices and ways of action. With the birth of reason and critical faculty, however, life in its own interest inhibits the formation and growth of non-rational modes of consciousness through which psychic energy flowed at an earlier stage of human evolution. Man is primarily governed by passion and instinct. Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is in itself an achievement. Once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of other modes of knowledge". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 125).

(vi) Basically the world has passed through two ages: the age of inspiration and the age of rational thinking and reflection on nature and history. The ancient world produced a few great systems of philosophy (like Greek and Roman). Anyhow their value was limited as humanity was still passing through the period of its minority. Dr Iqbal says: "There is no doubt that the ancient world produced some great systems of philosophy at a time when man was comparatively primitive and governed more or less by suggestion. But we must not forget that this system-building in the ancient world was the work of abstract thought, which cannot go beyond the systematization of vague religious beliefs and traditions, and gives us no hold on the concrete situations of life". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 126)

(vii) The Holy Prophet with whom Prophethood came to end, belonged to the ancient as well as the modern world. As the source of his inspiration was revelation and not the experimental study of nature and history, he belonged to the ancient world; but as the spirit of his teachings called for rational thinking and the study of nature and history with the birth of which the job of revelation is terminated, he belonged to the modern world. Dr Iqbal says: "Looking at the matter from this point of view, the Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned, he belongs to the ancient world; and in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned, he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction. The birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot forever be kept in leading strings; hence, in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Holy Qur'an and the emphasis it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality". (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 126)

These are the main points of the philosophy of the finality of Prophethood as conceived by Dr

Iqbal. Unfortunately this philosophy is unsound and several of its principles are incorrect.

The first objection to which it is amenable is that if this philosophy was accepted, that would mean that not only there was no longer any need of a new Prophet or a new revelation, but that there was also no need of any guidance by revelation at all, for experimental intellect had taken its place. This philosophy is the philosophy of the end of religion and not that of the finality of Prophethood. If this philosophy was accepted, the only thing that Islamic revelation could do was to proclaim the end of the era of religion and the beginning of the era of reason and science. Evidently this idea is not only contrary to the belief in the necessity of Islam but is also contrary to the view held by Dr Iqbal himself. All his efforts in fact, are directed to prove that reason and science though necessary for human society are not enough. Man requires faith and religion as much as he requires science and knowledge. Dr Iqbal says in clear terms that life is in need of fixed principles as well as changing minor factors, and that ijtihad is meant to apply the set principles to the specific situations. He says: "The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principle of 'Tawhid' (monotheism). Islam as a polity is the only practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to Allah, not to thrones. And since Allah is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to Him virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature. The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change.

A society based on such a conception of reality must reconcile, in its life, to the categories of permanence and change . It must possess eternal principles to regulate its collective life; because eternity gives us a foothold in the world of perpetual change. But eternal principles when they are understood to exclude all possibilities of change which, according to the Holy Qur'an, is one of the greatest signs of Allah, tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature. The failure of Europe in political and social science illustrates the former principle; the immobility of Islam during the last 500 years illustrates the latter. What then is the principle of movement in Islam? This is known as 'ijtihad'. (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 147)

According to the above statement, guidance of revelation will always be required, and the guidance provided by experimental intellect will never be able to take its place. Dr Iqbal himself supports the principle of the permanent need of guidance. But the philosophy he has put forward to explain the finality of Prophethood, requires that not only there should be no need of any new Prophet and new revelation, but that religion itself should come to an end.

This misleading interpretation of finality by Dr Iqbal means that man's need of guidance and education by the prophets is of the same nature as the need of a class by a child.

The child every year goes to the next class and changes his teacher. Similarly man in every period has gone to the next stage, and required a new code of religious law. When the child

reaches the final class, he completes his education and gets a certificate to that effect. Thereafter he is no longer in need of a teacher and can carry on his research independently. In the same way the man of the age of finality with the proclamation of the end of Prophethood has secured the certificate of the completion of his education. He can now undertake the study of Nature and History independently. That is what ijtihad means. With the end of Prophethood man has reached the stage of self-sufficiency.

There is no doubt that such an interpretation of the finality of Prophethood is wrong. The consequent results of this sort of interpretation are acceptable neither to Dr Iqbal himself, nor to those who have drawn these conclusions from what he has stated.

Further, should the view of Dr Iqbal be correct, the thing which he calls 'inner experience' (spiritual light and inspirations received by saintly persons) should also cease to exist, for it is also supposedly a part of the instinct which languishes with the appearance of experimental intellect. But according to Dr Iqbal that mystic experience still continues to exist. He asserts that from Islamic point of view inner experience is one of the three sources of human knowledge, the other two being Nature and History. Personally also Dr Iqbal has a strong mystic tendency. He firmly believes in inspiration. He says: "The idea however, does not mean that mystic experience, which qualitatively does not differ from the experience of the Prophets, has now ceased to exist as a vital fact. Indeed the Holy Qur'an regards both 'Anfus' (self) and 'Afaq' (world) as sources of knowledge. Allah reveals His signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge yielding capacity of all aspects of experience. The idea of finality, therefore, should not be taken to suggest that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. The intellectual value of the idea is that it tends to create an, independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by, generating the belief that all personal authority, claiming a supernatural origin has come to an end in the history of man... Mystic experience then, however unusual and abnormal, must. now be regarded by a Muslim as a perfectly natural experience open to critical scrutiny like other aspects of human experience"., (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 126)

What Dr Iqbal means to say is that with the end of Prophethood the inspirations and miracles of the saintly persons have, not come to an end, though they are no longer so authoritative, as they were in the past. Prior to the birth of experimented intellect, miracles had a perfectly natural authority. They were not open to any doubt. But for the intellectually developed man (of the age of finality) these things have ceased to be authoritative, and are now like other occurrences and phenomena open to critical scrutiny. Pre-finality period was that of miracles and supernatural events, but the age of finality is the age of reason, which does not regard any supernatural occurrence as a proof of anything. It judges every reality discovered through a mystic experience in accordance with its own standards.

This part of the remarks of Dr Iqbal is also not sound neither in regard to the pre-finality nor in regard to the post-finality period. We will make our comments on it under the following

heading:

Miracles of the Final Prophet

Furthermore, the view expressed by Dr Iqbal that revelation is a sort of instinct, is also wrong. This view has led him to make several other mistakes. As Dr Iqbal himself is fully conscious, of the fact, an instinct is a purely innate, unacquired and unconscious propensity. It is a faculty lower than senses and intellect with which the primitive animals such as insects and other animals of a class lower than that of insects, have been provided according to the law of creation. With the development of other means of guidance such as senses and intellect, instinct is weakened and becomes dormant. That is why man who among the animals enjoys the highest degree of thinking power, has the weakest instinctive power.

In contrast, revelation is a means of guidance which ranks higher than senses and intellect and to a great extent is something which is acquired. Above all, it is the highest degree of consciousness, and the field in which it makes discoveries is far vaster than the field in which experimental intellect can work.

In a previous section of this book, while discussing the question of ideology, we have proved that in view of the variety of the individual and social capabilities of man, complexity of his social relations and the dubiousness of the end of his evolutionary journey, the ideologies propounded by the philosophers and sociologists are misleading and bewildering. There is only one way open to man to have a sound ideology and that is the way of revelation. If we do not accept the way of revelation, we shall have to admit that man is unable to have an ideology at all.

The modern thinkers believe that the future line of the development of mankind can be determined through human ideologies only stage by stage. In other words, at every stage only the next stage can be determined, and that too according to the belief of these gentlemen. As for the subsequent stages and whether there exists any final stage at all, nothing is known. The fate of such ideologies is evident.

We wish that Dr Iqbal, who more or less studied the works of the Muslim gnostics and was especially devoted to the Mathnavi of Rumi, could have gone deeper into these works and found a better explanation of the finality of Prophethood. The gnostics say that Prophethood terminated because all the individuals and social stages of human development along with the way that man should follow to attain them were revealed all together. As thereafter none could discover anything additional, it was the duty of everyone to follow this last message.

The sufis say: that the final is he, who has finalized all stages, and leaves no stage uncovered. This is the basis of finality, not the development of the experimental intelligence of society as conceived by Dr Iqbal. If he had made a deeper study of the works of only those sufis to

whom he himself was devoted, (like Rumi), he could know that revelation is not an instinct. It is a spirit and soul superior to the rational spirit. Rumi, the mystic poet says:

"Know that the soul of man is different from that of a cow and a donkey, and again the soul of a Prophet and a saint (holy man) is different from that of an ordinary man."

"The body is visible, but the soul is hidden. Again intellect is more hidden than soul. The spirit of revelation is still more hidden. The intellect of the Holy Prophet could be perceived by anybody. But the spirit of his revelation was not so perceptible".

"He was guided by the Protected Tablet and that is why was protected from any mistake and error. Divine revelation is neither astrology nor geomancy nor a dream. It is a fact and reality".

It appears that Dr Iqbal has unconsciously made the same mistake as was made by the Western world, which holds that. knowledge has replaced faith. Of course Dr Iqbal was severely opposed to this theory of replacement. But his philosophy of the finality of Prophethood somehow leads to the same conclusion. Dr Iqbal describes revelation as a sort of an instinct. He also asserts that instincts cease to function when intellectual and thinking faculties begin to work. This remark of his is correct but is applicable to those cases in which thinking power performs the same function that was previously performed by an instinct. But in those cases in which their functions are different, there is no reason why an instinct should cease to work when thinking power becomes active. Therefore even if we suppose that Divine revelation is a sort of instinct whose function is to put forward a sort of world conception and an ideology not produced by intellect and thinking power, there, is no reason why with the development of inductive intellect, in the words of Dr Iqbal, the function of this instinct should come to an end.

The fact is that Dr Iqbal in spite of all his outstanding talent, extraordinary intelligence and love of Islam is basically a product of Western culture, for his entire education was Western, though he made some studies in Islamic culture, especially in Islamic law, mysticism and philosophy. That is the reason why he sometimes makes grave mistakes. In the preface of our book, Principles of Philosophy and Method of Realism, vol. V, we have referred to the faultiness of Dr Iqbal's ideas about deep philosophical questions. That is why it is not proper to draw a comparison between him and Sayyid Jamiluddin Asadabadi.[14] Though from the viewpoint of mental endowments Jamaluddin is not comparable to Dr Iqbal, his original education was Islamic and Western education was only his secondary acquisition. In addition, the late Jamaluddin, owing to his vast travels in the Muslim countries and a close study of their affairs was more conversant than Dr Iqbal with the situation in the Muslim world. Therefore unlike Dr lqbal he did not make any grave mistakes in evaluating certain events which took place in some Muslim countries like Turkey and Iran, for he could judge them better.

[14] Popularly known as Jamaluddin Afghani.

Miracle of Finality

The Holy Qur'an is the everlasting miracle of the last Prophet. The miracles of the former Prophets like Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Musa and Prophet 'Isa, each of whom had a revealed Book and also wrought miracles, were distinct from their revealed Books. They wrought such miracles as the transformation of a blazing fire into 'coolness and peace', the conversion of a dry piece of wood into a serpent and bringing the dead to life. Obviously each of these miracles, was temporary and passing. But in the case of the last Prophet his Book itself was his miracle. It is the proof of his Prophethood. As such, the miracle of finality, unlike any other miracle, is everlasting, not passing nor meant only for the time being.

The fact that a Divine Book is the miracle of the last Prophet is absolutely in comformity with his time, the age of the advancement of science, knowledge, culture and education. The eternity of this Holy Book is also in consonance with the eternity of its message which is never to be abrogated.

The Holy Qur'an in several verses of it has expressly proclaimed this extraordinary and superhuman aspect of itself. One of these verses says:

"If you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our bondman, then bring a chapter like it." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:23)

It has also expressly mentioned several other miracles wrought by the last Prophet.

The Holy Qur'an has dwelt on a number of questions related to the miracles. It declares that a Divine message must be accompanied by some miracles, that a miracle is a decisive evidence and definite proof, that the Prophets work the miracles by the will of Allah and that they work them to prove the veracity of their claim, and that they are not bound to accede to every request of everybody in this respect. In other words, the Prophets are not expected to hold an exhibition of miracles or to set up a factory of them.

As the Holy Qur'an has dealt with these questions, it has also expressly recounted the stories of the miracles of many of the former Prophets like Nuh, Ibrahim, Lut, Salih, Hud, Musa and 'Isa, and has categorically confirmed them.

Some orientalists and Christian clergymen on the basis of those verses in which the Holy Qur'an responded negatively to the demand of the idolaters to work the miracles proposed by them, have claimed that the Prophet of Islam told the people that he had no miracle other than the Holy Qur'an, and if they did not accept it, he could do nothing further. Some 'liberal-minded' Muslim writers also have accepted this view, and explaining it, they say that the miracle is an argument which can convince only immature humanity looking for something extraordinary and fantastic. A mature man is not impressed by such things and is concerned only with the things rational. As the age of the Prophet of Islam was that of rationality, not of myths and fancy, he declined by the will of Allah to accept any request for a miracle besides the Holy Qur'an. One writer says: "To seek the help of the miracles was unavoidable for the former Prophets, for in those days it was almost impossible for them to convince people with any rational arguments. At the time the Prophet of Islam appeared, humanity had passed the period of its minority. It had reached the stage of its intellectual majority. The child of yesterday no longer depended on his mother and was able to stand on his own feet and use his brain. In such circumstances it was not unreasonable that the Prophet of Islam resisted the pressure of the disbelievers and his opponents demanding from him to work miracles. To prove the truth of his mission he solely relied on rational arguments and historical evidence. In spite of the insistence of the disbelievers the Prophet of Islam by the order of Allah refused to work miracles similar to those of the former Prophets. He relied on the Holy Qur'an alone as an incomparable miracle. Its incomparability is in itself a proof of the finality of Prophethood. It is a Book that contains truths, teachings and guidance in complete conformity with all aspects of life. It is a miracle worthy of mature humanity, not an immature humanity believing in myths and fables.

The so called our liberal-minded Muslim writer adds: "The atmosphere in which the ancient man lived was always full of myths, idle stories and supernatural ideas. Hence he was not impressed by anything unless it was contrary to what was reasonable and perceptible. That is why we find mankind throughout history to be fond of what is unknown and in search of what is supernatural. This sentimental attitude towards what is imperceptible and unreasonable is more acute among the more uncivilized. The more men are close to nature, the more they are fond of what is extra-natural. Myths are an evil outcome of this situation. The man of the desert is always looking for a miracle. His world is full of spirits and wonderful mysteries. The spirit of a primitive man is moved only by what is marvellous and mysterious. That is why we see that not only the Prophets, but also the kings, the heroes and the sages of every nation have resorted to something supernatural to justify what they claimed. In these circumstances the Prophet whose mission was based on the invisible had to have recourse to a miracle more than others, for at this period of history supernatural events were more effective than logic, science and indisputable facts".

However, the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him and his progeny) is an exception to this rule. He announced that his miracle is a Book. He made this announcement in a society, in the largest commercial city of which the number of those who knew the art of writing was not more than seven. This society never thought of anything other than boasting,

the sword, the camel and the male child. It is in itself a miracle that in this society he announced that his miracle was a Heavenly Book. He announced this in a country where no Heavenly Book ever existed. His Lord, Allah, the Creator swears by the ink, the pen and the writing before a people who regarded the pen as the tool of a few helpless and weak persons. This is a miracle in itself. Only that Book is a miracle which can always be seen. Unlike any other miracle it is the only miracle the marvellous and extraordinary nature of which can be more accurately understood and appreciated by those who are more wise and more learned in comparatively advanced and cultured societies. It is the only miracle the belief in which is not confined to those who have faith in supernatural things. Its supernaturalness can be acknowledged by any knowledgeable person. It is the only miracle which is not for the common people. It is for the intelligentsia, unlike other miracles it is not intended to stimulate the admiration of the onlookers and to persuade them to accept a message on that basis. It is meant to educate those who accept it. It is a message in itself. The miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him and his progeny), though not a human product, is not something not concerned with the human beings. Unlike the miracles of the past, it is not a device used only to make people believe, and having no other use. But his miracle represents a sort of the display of the highest human talent. It is also the best model for exercise and training, and for that a model which is always available.

The Holy Prophet tried to divert human inquisitiveness from what was extraordinary and supernatural to the rational, logical and intellectual problems and social and moral questions. His task was not so easy, especially in view of the fact that the people with whom he had to deal were not willing to submit to anything except what was unnatural. It is really astonishing how he called himself a Prophet, invited people to accept his Divine message and at the same time admitted formally that he was not aware of the "unknown". Apart from the human value of this admission, what is striking is the extraordinary truth which is felt in his actions and which compels every heart to bow to him in admiration and respect. Some people asked him to foretell what price their goods were to fetch so that they might plan accordingly to be able to earn profit and make money. The Holy Qur'an ordered him to say: **"I have no power to acquire for myself a benefit or to avert any trouble except by the will of Allah. If I had the knowledge of the unknown, I would have certainly acquired for myself much that is good and no harm would have touched me. I am no more than the one who gives warning and brings good news to a believing people."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:188)

A Prophet who could make no prophecy, who did not converse with the spirits, the fairies and the jinn and who did not work a miracle everyday, was no good in the sight of the people of the desert. The Holy Prophet called upon them to look into the universe, to observe piety, uprightness and faith, to acquire knowledge and to understand the meaning of life and destiny, but they ceaselessly continued to ask him to work a miracle and make a prophecy. On the other hand Allah prompted him to say: **"Glory be to my Lord! I am no more than a human messenger."** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:93)

Those who deny the occurrence of miracles rely mostly on the following Qur'anic verses

saying: **"They say: We will not believe you unless you make a spring gush forth from the earth for us; or you have a garden of date-palms and cause rivers to flow abundantly in their midst; or you cause the sky to fall on us in pieces as you have asserted, or you bring Allah and the angels before us; or you have a house of gold; or you ascend to heaven. But even then we will not believe in you until you bring down for us a book which we can read. Say: Glory be to my Lord. I am nothing but a human messenger."**"(Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:90 - 93)

They say that these verses show that the idolaters asked the Holy Prophet to work a miracle other than the Holy Qur'an, but he declined to accede to their demand.

Unfortunately we cannot agree to this theory, especially in view of the points mentioned above and in view of what we have said in regard to the superiority of the Holy Qur'an to all other miracles. From our point of view the disputable points are as under:

(i) The Prophet of Islam had no miracle other than the Holy Qur'an. He refused to fulfil the demand of the idolaters who wanted him to produce some other miracle. The verses of the Surah Bani Isra'il prove this point.

(ii) As for the value and effectiveness of miracles, it may be said that they were compatible with the period of the minority of mankind when reason and logic were not effective. Even the sages and the kings had recourse to supernatural things to justify themselves. The Prophets also had to resort to them to convince their people. The Prophet of Islam whose miracle is a Book is an exception to this rule. He justifies himself by means of a Book or actually by reason and logic.

(iii) The Prophet of Islam tried to divert the attention of the people from the unusual and supernatural things to the rational and logical questions and to turn their sensitivity from wonders to the actualities and facts.

Now let us discuss one by one the points made by the opponents of the miracles: Is it true that the Prophet of Islam had no miracle except the Holy Qur'an? Apart from the fact that this view is unacceptable from the viewpoint of history and traditions reported by numerous authorities, it is contrary even to what the Holy Qur'an itself says. The miracle of the split of the moon is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an itself. Suppose someone explains away the verse mentioning this miracle, though it is not amenable to any explanation, how will the story of the ascension of the Holy Prophet mentioned in the Surah Bani Isra'il be explained? The Holy Qur'an expressly says: **"Glory be to Him who carried His slave by night from the Masjidul Haram (in Makkah) to the Masjidul Aqsa' (in Jerusalem), the precincts of which We have blessed. (We took him on this journey) to show him some of Our signs."** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:1)

Is this occurrence not a supernatural event and a miracle?

In Surah at-Tahri'm there is an event saying that the Holy Prophet told a secret in confidence to one of his wives who divulged it to another wife of his. The Holy Prophet asked the first wife why she disclosed the secret to the second one and recounted a part of the conversation which had transpired between the two. That wife was surprised and asked the Holy Prophet how he came to know all that. The Holy Prophet replied that Allah had apprised him of the event. When the Holy Prophet confided a fact to one of his wives and when she afterwards divulged it and Allah apprised him thereof, he made known to her of part thereof and passed over the rest. And when he told it to her, she said: "Who has told you?" He said: "The Knower, the Aware has told me". Does this not mean telling the unknown? Is this not a miracle? What has been mentioned in Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:90 - 93 and some other verses does not at all indicate what has been inferred from it. The idolaters were not asking for a proof of Prophethood and sign with a view to gain satisfaction. They were actually asking for something else. These verses as well as Surah al-'Ankabut, 29:50 throw ample light on the unique mentality of the idolaters who were apparently demanding a miracle. These verses also make clear the philosophy of the Holy Qur'an about the miracles of the Prophets.

In Surah Bani Isra'il the idolaters begin their talk saying virtually: **"We will not join you unless you on your part make a spring gush forth for us in this arid land of Makkah."** This is just a bargain.

They further say: **"Or you have a garden of date palms with rivers flowing in their midst or you have a house full of gold, so that we may share these things with you."** This is again a bargain, as they wanted these things for their own benefit.

They say: **"Or you cause the sky to fall on us in pieces as you think that it will fall on the Day of Resurrection."**

This is asking for a punishment and the end of everything, though apparently they asked for a miracle.

"Or you ascend to heaven or you bring Allah and the angels be fore us." (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:90 - 93)

This is again a bargain, though this time they were not asking for riches, but were asking for something they could be proud of. Anyhow, they ignored the fact that it was impracticable to fulfil their demand.

The words actually used by the idolaters are notable. They did not says: 'Lan numina bika', that is we will not believe you. Instead they said: 'Lan numina laka', meaning we will not join you to your advantage. This difference in meaning has been pointed out by the scholars of the

principles of jurisprudence while explaining similar expressions in Surah at-Tawbah, 9:61. Further, the intention of the idolaters is clear from the way they put their demand. They asked the Holy Prophet to make a spring gush forth for them in exchange for their support and expedient faith. Evidently this is a demand for remuneration and not for a proof and a miracle. The Holy Prophet came to make the people believers, not to purchase their opinion and faith.

The writer whom we quoted above, himself says: "The idolaters asked the Holy Prophet to foretell the price their goods would fetch so that they could earn profit". Evidently this demand for a miracle was not made in order to know the truth. They wanted to use the Prophet as a means of making money. Naturally his reply was: "If I had the knowledge of the unknown , I would have certainly used it to acquire for myself much that is good in this world. Obviously miracles are not meant for such purposes. I am a Prophet. I only give warning and bring good news to a believing people".

The idolaters, thought that the Prophet could work a miracle to order, any time and for any purpose. That is why they wanted him to make a spring gush forth, to have a house of gold and make a prophecy about the market rates. But the fact is that a miracle is just like a revelation. Its occurrence is determined from "that side", not "from this". Just as a revelation is not subject to the wish of the Prophet and is a process which influences his will, similarly a miracle is also a process that proceeds from the other side and influences the will of the Prophet, though it is worked by him. That is what the words, 'by the will of Allah' signify both in the case of a revelation and a miracle. And that is what is meant by the following verse of Surah al-'Ankabut, which has been misinterpreted by the Christian missionaries: **"The signs are with Allah alone. I am nothing but a plain warner".** (Surah al-'Ankabut, 29:50)

The same is the case with the revealing of the unknown miraculously. As far as the personality of the Holy Prophet is concerned, he is not aware of the unknown. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Say: I do not say to you that I am an angel, nor am I aware of the unknown."**

But when he comes under a supernatural influence he tells of what is hidden, and when he is asked how he knew that, he replies that Allah, the All-knowing apprised him of the unknown matter.

When the Holy Prophet says that he does not know the unknown and if he had known it he would have earned a lot of money through that knowledge, he wants to refute the false presumption of the idolaters; and makes it clear that the knowledge of the unknown falls within the range of a miracle for he receives it through Divine revelation only. Had his knowledge of the unknown been automatic and had he been able to use it for any purpose he liked, he would have used it to fill his own coffers instead of telling the future market rates to others in order to enable them to fill their pockets.

In another verse the Holy Qur'an says: **"He is the knower of what is hidden and He reveals His secret to none, except to a Messenger He has chosen."** (Surah al-Jinn, 72:26 - 27)

The Holy Prophet was certainly His chosen Messenger.

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an has recounted many miracles of the former Prophets like Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Musa and Prophet 'Isa. Then how was it possible that the Holy Prophet when asked to work a miracle like that of the former Prophets; should say that he was no more than a human messenger? Had not the idolaters a right to retort and say: "You yourself describe the miracles of the former Prophets so eloquently. Were they not human beings or were they not Prophets?" Is it possible that such a glaring contradiction should exist in the Holy Qur'an? Is it imaginable that the idolaters did not take notice of such a glaring contradiction?

Should the thinking of these liberal-minded be correct, the Holy Prophet instead of saying: "Glory be to Allah! I am no more than a human messenger", should have said: "Glory be to Allah! I being the last Prophet, am excluded from the rule applicable to other Prophets. Therefore do not ask me to do, what the other Prophets were asked to do". Anyhow, he did not say so. On the other hand he said: "I am a messenger like all other messengers".

This shows that what the idolaters, demanded from the Holy Prophet was not a miracle or a sign with a view to find out the truth. They were asking for something else and their demand was such that the Prophets usually do not accede to it. That is why the Holy Prophet declined to give a positive reply to their selfish and arrogant demand. They were actually asking for something impossible.

We admit that the common people are inclined to invent the stories of the miracles and ascribe them not only to the Prophets and the Imams but even to any grave, stone or tree. But that is no reason why we should deny that the Holy Prophet had miracles other than the Holy Quran.

Further, there is a difference between a Prophetic miracle and a saintly miracle. A Prophetic miracle is a Divine sign and a proof to prove that there is a Divine assignment. It is always linked together with a challenge. It has certain special conditions and takes place for a special purpose. As for a saintly miracle, that is a supernatural event which is purely an outcome of the spiritual power and personal sanctity of a perfect or a semi-perfect man and does not take place to prove the truth of any Divine mission. It is almost an affair with no special conditions attached to it. A Prophetic miracle is the voice of Allah in support of a particular person. But that is not the case with a saintly miracle.

Value and Effect of a Miracle

What is the value of a miracle? The logicians and the philosophers divide the material that is used to argue a case into several kinds. Some arguments have a proving value. They are something beyond any reasonable doubt, as is the case with the data used by a mathematician. Some other arguments have only a persuasive value, as is the case with the arguments advanced by the rhetoricians. If the arguments of the latter are analysed, they often do not prove to be convincing. But so long as they are not dissected, they prove quite moving. Some other arguments are merely emotional or have some other value.

Value of a Miracle From the Viewpoint of the Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an describes the miracles of the Prophets as the signs and clear proofs, and regards them as a convincing and logical evidence of the existence of Allah in the same way as it regards the creation as the incontrovertible proof of His existence.

The Holy Qur'an has elaborately dwelt on the question of the miracles. It considers the demand of the people for a miracle and their refusal to submit to the Prophets unless a sign was shown to them, to be reasonable and justified, provided the demand was not made for ulterior motives or just as a pastime. It has eloquently narrated many stories of the practical response of the Prophets to such demands. The Holy Qur'an has nowhere indicated that a miracle is only a persuasive argument suitable to the simple-minded people and appropriate to the period of the minority of mankind. On the other hand it has called it a clear proof.

Nature of the Holy Prophet's Guidance

The miracle of the 'Finality' being a Book, a piece of literature and a treasure of culture and knowledge, is an everlasting miracle. Many of its miraculous aspects are still gradually coming to light. Some wonderful features of the Holy Qur'an which have become known to the people of our times were not known and could not be known in the past. The value of a Book-miracle is better grasped by the thinkers than by the common people. It is true that this miracle because of its special merits, is appropriate to the period of the finality, but, is it also true that this miracle has the nature of a Book because it is intended, among other things, to divert the attention of man from the unknown to the known, from the unreasonable to the reasonable and logical, and from the supernatural to the natural, Does the Holy Prophet try to draw of the inquisitiveness of people from the unusual and supernatural things to the rational, logical, intellectual, scientific, social and moral questions and to turn their sensitivity from wonders to the realities?

That does not appear to be true. Should it be true, that would mean that all other Prophets were inviting people to the unknown and only the Holy Prophet invited them to the known. If this is the case, then why have hundreds of the verses of the Holy Qur'an been devoted to the description of miracles?

Undoubtedly it is one of the basic distinctions of the Holy Qur'an that it calls for the study of nature and describes the natural phenomena as Divine signs. But a call for the study of nature does not mean diverting the attention of people from everything that does not pertain to nature. On the other hand a call for the study of natural phenomena as signs means passing from nature to what is beyond nature and from what is perceptible to what is intelligible.

The importance of the work of the Holy Prophet lies in the fact that just as he calls the people for the study of nature, history and society, he also persuades those who submit to nothing but supernatural to submit to reason, logic and science also. He similarly tries to make those who are fond of reason and logic and submit to nothing but what is natural and perceptible, to get acquainted with a higher logic as well.

The basic difference between the world presented by the religion on the whole, and especially by Islam, and the world depicted by purely human sciences and philosophies, is that as William James has put it, in the construction of the world of religion certain other elements have gone in addition to the material elements and the laws generally recognized by mankind.

The Holy Qur'an does not want to divert the attention from natural and perceptible things to supernatural and imperceptible things. The importance of the Holy Qur'an lies in the fact that besides paying attention to what is natural or in the words of the Holy Quran, is the seen, it puts the belief in the unseen in the forefront of its teachings: **"This is the Book about which there is no doubt. It is a guidance to the pious, who believe in the unseen."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2 - 3)

How can the Holy Qur'an divert the attention of people from what is supernatural when it is itself a miracle, and so many other miracles have been described in more than hundred verses of it.

We are unable to understand what is meant by saying that the Book is the only miracle, the belief in which is not confined to those who believe in the supernatural things.

What belief? Does the writer mean the belief that the Holy Qur'an is a Book the contents of which are very valuable and sublime, or the belief that it is a miracle? The belief that a thing is miraculous in the sense that it is a Divine sign, amounts to the belief in its supernaturalness. How can a man have a belief in a miracle and at the same time not have a belief in anything supernatural?

It has been said that the miracle of the Prophet of Islam does not belong to the category of non-human matters though it is a non-human act. To us the meaning of this statement also is not clear for it can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly it may mean that the Holy Qur'an being a revealed Book, not having been composed by the Holy Prophet is a non-human act, but though it is the word of Allah, not of any human being, it belongs to the category of human

matters and is an ordinary act, like other human acts.

It appears to be improbable that this is what the writer means, for in the case of the acceptance of this view, the Holy Qur'an would have no distinction over other revealed Books. All the other revealed Books have also issued from the same source of revelation, but as they have no supernatural aspect, they not belong to the category of superhuman acts.

There is a category of the sayings of the Holy Prophet known as Hadith al-Qudsi. These sayings are the revealed words of Allah but still they are neither miraculous nor superhuman.

The Holy Qur'an is distinguished from other revealed Books and from Hadith al-Qudsi in that it is superhuman. It is revealed as well as superhuman and supernatural. That is why the Holy Qur'an says: **"Say: If all human beings and jinn were to combine to produce the like of the Quran, they would surely fail to compose the like of it, even if they helped one another."** (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:88)

The other interpretation of the above-mentioned statement may be that unlike the miracles of other Prophets such as converting a staff into a serpent and bringing the dead to life which definitely do not belong to the category of human acts, the miracle of Muhammad (Peace be on him and his progeny) being a sort of learned speech and dissertation, belongs to that category, but it is still superhuman, having sprung from a supernatural source. Should this interpretation be what is intended, and it should be, then this statement in itself is an admission that there exists what is supernatural and extraordinary and that there are things which are unseen and unknown. Then why should we think of a miracle as if it is something mythical and irrational. Why should we not from the very beginning distinguish between the miracles on the one hand and the myths and superstitions on the other, so that the less-informed people may not form that impression of the miracles which we do not want them to form. Why instead of saying clearly and in a straightforward manner that the Book of the Prophet of Islam is a miracle, should in a roundabout way say that his miracle is a Book?

In one of the last works of the same writer an article has been published under the heading: 'The Quran and the Computer'. This article may be considered to be a correction of his earlier view about the miraculousness of the Holy Qur'an and a sign of the gradual development of his thinking.

In this article he has proposed the replacement of the letters of the Holy Qur'an by the computerized signs and the use of this great manifestation of human culture for the discovery of the Qur'anic knowledge. This is a timely and sound suggestion. The writer has hinted at the endeavours made and being made by some Egyptian and Iranian scholars in this field. He has also made an interesting discourse under the caption: 'How to Prove the Inimitability of the Qur'an'. In this article he has referred to a valuable book entitled, 'The Process of the Development of the Qur'an', which has lately been published and in which its learned author

has proved that the size and the length of the verses and the words revealed to the Holy Prophet in over 23 years form and exact and regular curve. Commenting on the discovery made in this book the writer says: "Is there any speaker in the world the year of whose sentences may be ascertained from their length, especially when these sentences do not form the text of any literary or scientific book produced by an author in a regular manner? In contrast, they are the sentences which came from time to time on the lips of a man over a long period of twenty-three years of his busy life. They do not form a book written on a particular subject, nor do they pertain to even any pre-conceived field. They cover multifarious questions which arose in society from time to time. Some of them answer the specific queries made, and some others deal with the problems that came up in the course of a long-drawn struggle. They were revealed to a great leader and were collected and arranged later".

The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is our celestial Book and the eternal miracle of our Holy Prophet. This Divine Book was revealed to the Holy Prophet over a period of 23 years. The Holy Qur'an besides being a revealed Book and a manifestation of the miracle-producing power of the Holy Prophet has had a deeper and greater role than that of the staff of Prophet Musa and the breath of Prophet 'Isa. The Holy Prophet used to recite the verses of the Holy Qur'an to the people. Their magnetic power on many occasions drew many a man to Islam. Such incidents are innumerable in Islamic history.

The Holy Qur'an is a collection of 114 chapters which consist of 6205 verses comprising about 78,000 words.

The fact that Muslims from the early days of Islam till the present day have been taking an unprecedented interest in the Holy Qur'an, shows their devotion to it. In the lifetime of the Holy Prophet the Holy Qur'an was preserved in writing by a number of persons especially appointed by him and known as the 'scribes of revelation'. Besides, most of the Muslims irrespective of their sex and age were keen to memorize the whole or a part of the Holy Qur'an. They recited it in their prayers and considered it a meritorious act to recite it even when they were not offering prayers. They really enjoyed its recitation.

Great Interest of Muslims in the Holy Qur'an

Under the impact of their ardent love for their revealed Book the Muslims in every age have rendered some service to the Holy Qur'an corresponding with their intellectual and practial potentialities. They memorized it. They acquired special training in reading it properly and uttering every letter of it through proper organs. They wrote commentaries on it and compiled special books explaining the meaning of every word of it. They counted its verses, its words and even its letters. They explored its meanings and applied results to the legal, moral, social, philosophical, gnostic and scientific questions. They adorned their speeches and writings by quoting the verses of the Holy Qur'an. The inscriptions of high merit, Mosaics and Qashani tiles inscribed with beautifully drawn and illuminated lines and letters contained the Qur'anic verses. The Muslims taught the Holy Qur'an to their children before giving them any other education. They compiled Arabic grammar and Arabic dictionaries to facilitate the understanding of the Holy Qur'an. They were inspired by it to develop the art of rhetoric.

The devotion of Muslims to the Holy Qur'an was the source of the origin of a number of sciences and literary arts which would not have come into being if it did not exist.

Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is an everlasting miracle of the last Prophet. From the very beginning of its revelation in Makkah which began with small surahs, the Holy Prophet formally threw a challenge to the idolaters. He claimed that the Holy Quran was not his work. It was the work of Allah and neither he nor any other human being could produce a like of it. He said that if they did not believe him, they could make an attempt to produce the like of it, and for that purpose could seek the help of anybody they liked. But they should know beforehand that they would never succeed in such an attempt even if all the human beings and the jinn joined hands together with them. The opponents of the Holy Prophet neither during his lifetime nor during any subsequent period of the past 1400 years, have been able to respond to this challenge. The only thing that the opponents of Islam of the Holy Prophet's time could do was that they asserted that the Holy Quran was a piece of magic.

This accusation was in itself an admission of the supernaturalness of the Holy Qur'an and of their inability to emulate it. The die-hard opponents of the Holy Prophet had no scruples. They were so desperate that they left no stone unturned in order to harm and weaken his position. But the only thing they were unable to do was that which was proposed by the Holy Prophet himself and expressly asked by the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an had asked them to produce the like of at least one surah of it even if that be a one-line surah like Surah at-Tawhid or Surah al-Kawthar.

Various Aspects of the Inimitability of the Holy Qur'an

Here we propose to refer to some aspects of the miraculousness or supernaturalness of the Holy Qur'an. On the whole the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an has two aspects: one of them pertains to its words and the other to its contents.

The inimitability of its words is due to its beautiful and artistic diction, and the inimitability of its contents is due to their high intellectual and scientific value. Each of these two aspects, especially the second one again in its turn has several aspects. Lately certain Egyptian and Iranian scholars have claimed that one of the aspects of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an is that its letters and words have been so arranged that its verses form a special type of ascending curve.

Wording of the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an has its own style, which is different from that of both poetry and prose. It is not poetry because it is neither rhymed, nor has it a metrical rhythm. Moreover, poetry entails

a sort of imagery called poetic fancy. It is interwoven with exaggeration which amounts to telling a lie. The Holy Qur'an has no poetic imagery nor fanciful similes and metaphors. At the same time it is no ordinary prose, for it is characterized by a kind of harmonious flow and cadence not found in any other prose work. The Muslims have always recited the Holy Qur'an with a particular harmonic tune.

There are religious instructions to the effect that the Holy Qur'an should be recited in a melodious voice. The Holy Imams sometimes recited the Holy Qur'an in their houses so melodiously that the passers-by stopped in the street to listen to their recitation. No other piece of prose can be melodized in the same way as the Holy Qur'an. Its sound-effect is compatible with its spiritual value and is different from that of music. Since the invention of radio no other spiritual speech has been found comparable with the Holy Qur'an in its sweet melodious effect. In addition to the Muslim countries the non-Muslim countries also have included the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in their radio programmes on account of its sweet sound and beauty. It is astonishing that the beauty of the Holy Qur'an has surpassed the limits of time and place. Many of the beautiful speeches are appreciated only during a particular period of time and with a change in taste they lose their value and effect. Some of them are appreciated only by certain nations having a particular taste and a particular cultural background. But the beauty of the Holy Qur'an is unique. It is not peculiar to any particular time, race or culture.

All those who are conversant with the diction of the Holy Qur'an, find it conforming to their individual taste. The more the time passes and the more the various nations get acquainted with the Holy Qur'an, the more they are fascinated by its charming beauty.

The biased Jews, Christians and the followers of certain other religions over the past fourteen centuries have in various ways offered resistance to the Holy Quran with a view to weaken its position. They alleged that alteration had taken place in it. They tried to create doubts about various matters concerning it and they resorted to so many other machinations and tricks, but they never thought of seeking the help of their writers and men of letters to respond to the challenge of the Holy Qur'an and produce at least a small surah like it.

In the history of Islam there appeared a large number of people known as zindiqs or heretics. Some of them were extraordinarily intelligent. They in various ways criticized the religion generally and the Holy Qur'an particularly. Some of them enjoyed a great command of the Arabic language. They tried to contest the superiority of the Holy Qur'an; but all that they could do was that they proved their own lowliness and the grandeur of the Holy Qur'an. In this connection history has related the stories of Ibn Rawandi, Abul 'Ala' al-Mu'ari and Abut Tayyib al-Mutanabbi. It was they who wanted to show that they were able to emulate the Holy Qur'an and could prove that it was a human work. There arose also many pretenders who claimed to be the Prophets. They produced utterances about which they claimed that they were revealed to them by Allah just like the Holy Qur'an. Tulayhah, Musylimah and Sajah belong to this category. They again could prove only the grandeur of the Holy Qur'an and

their own lowliness.

It is astonishing that the sayings of the Holy Prophet himself on whose tongue the Holy Qur'an flowed, are dissimilar to the Holy Qur'an. A very large number of the sayings of the Holy Prophet, including his sermons, invocations, maxims and orders have come down to us. Their language is apt and flawless, but it is in no way similar to that of the Holy Qur'an. This clearly proves that the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur'an have originated from two different sources.

Imam Ali's contact with the Holy Qur'an began when he was only 10 years old. In other words, he was 10 years of age when the first verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed to the Holy Prophet. He received them as zealously as a thirsty person would receive pure water. Till the last moments of the Holy Prophet's life he headed the scribes of revelation. He knew the Holy Qur'an by heart and recited it regularly. At night his most favorite act of worship was the recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

In these circumstance if it had been possible to emulate the style of the Holy Qur'an, Imam Ali with his unrivalled eloquence would certainly have done so. Influenced by the style of the Holy Qur'an as he was, his sermons would have taken the form of the Qur'anic verses. But as we know, his style is quite different from that of the Holy Qur'an.

When Imam Ali in his eloquent sermons quotes a verse of the Holy Qur'an, it always has a distinctive look and shines like an extraordinarily bright star among other stars.

The Holy Qur'an has not used the themes which are usually selected by the human beings in order to display their rhetorical skill, such as self-glorification, panegyric, satire, elegy, love-songs and description of natural scenery. The Holy Qur'an has not dealt with any of these themes. Its subjects are all spiritual, such as Monotheism, Resurrection, Prophethood, ethical duties, rules of law, religious exhortations and moral stories. However, its diction is remarkably superb and extremely beautiful, in every case.

The arrangement of the words in the Holy Qur'an is matchless. Nobody can change the position of a single word without damaging its beauty nor can anybody produce a like of it. In this respect the Holy Qur'an is comparable to a beautiful building in which no alteration can be made, nor can anybody construct a building better than it or like it. The style of the Holy Qur'an is unprecedented and will ever remain unrivalled. In spite of the challenge of the Holy Qur'an, no one has ever been able to rival or emulate it.

The challenge of the Holy Qur'an is still valid and will ever remain so. Even now the faithful Muslims invite the people the world over to take part in the competition suggested by the Holy Qur'an. They say that if the like of the Holy Qur'an was produced, they would give up their faith. They are sure that such a thing cannot happen and would never happen.

Contents of the Holy Qur'an

The inimitability of the Holy Qur'an from the viewpoint of its contents is a subject which requires such a vast discussion that for it a separate book would be needed. Anyhow, we may briefly discuss the preliminaries here. First of all we should know what kind of a Book the Holy Qur'an is. Is it a philosophical Book? Is it a Book of science, literature, or art?

The answer is that it is none of them. The Prophets are a distinct type. They are neither philosophers, nor scientists, neither men of letters, nor historians, neither artists nor craftsmen. Still they have all the good points of all of them with many things extra. The Holy Qur'an is a revealed Book. It is neither a Book of philosophy, nor of science nor of history nor of literature nor of art. But it has the good points of all of them with many additional merits.

The Holy Qur'an is a Book intended for the guidance of man. It may be called the Book of man - a man who has been created by Allah and for whose guidance and salvation the Prophets came and taught him how to know himself.

As it is the Book of man, it is also the Book of Allah, for man is the being whose creation began prior to the creation of this world and will end after the end of this world. From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an man is the breath of Divine spirit. He has to return to Allah. Hence the knowledge of Allah and the knowledge of man are interrelated. Man cannot know his Allah correctly unless he knows himself, nor can he have the knowledge of his reality unless he knows Allah.

The man of the school of the Prophets whose complete description is found in the Holy Qur'an is vastly different from the man whose knowledge can be obtained through science. The man of the school of the Prophets is far more extensive.

The man described by science exists only between the two points of his birth and his death. Darkness surrounds all that is before and after these two points, science has no knowledge of it. But the man of the Holy Qur'an is not so limited. He has come from another world and his future lies in that world. In this world he has to perfect himself. His future in the next world depends on the nature of his activity in this world and on the fact whether he makes right type of effort or not. Further, ordinary human beings do not know man even between the points of his birth and death as well as the Prophets do.

The man of the Holy Qur'an must know: (i) From where has he come? (ii) Where is he going? (iii) Where is he at present? (iv) How should he be? (v) What should he do?

His weal and prosperity in this and the next world will be ensured only when he gives practical answers to these five questions correctly.

To know from where he has come, man should know his Creator and to know his Creator, he should go deep into the world and man as His signs.

To know where he is going, he should reflect on and believe in what the Holy Qur'an has stated about Resurrection, torments of the Day of Judgement, recompensation and severe retribution which may in certain cases be eternal. He should believe that just as Allah is the point of the beginning of all existing things, He is also the point of their return.

To know where he is, he should study the world system and the laws operating in it. He should find out the position of man vis-a-vis other things and should rediscover himself. To know what he should be, he should acquire the knowledge of true human ways and manners and should build his habits and behaviour accordingly.

To know what he should do, he should abide by a certain code of individual and social rules and regulations.

In addition to all this the man of the Holy Qur'an must have a belief in the existence of certain imperceptible and invisible things described by the Holy Qur'an itself as the 'Unseen', and believe that they are the channels through which the will of Allah operates in the universe. He must also know that Allah, the Almighty has never left man without Divine guidance. He raised a large number of the selected people as the Prophets, who conveyed His message to mankind.

The man of the Holy Qur'an looks at nature as a sign of Allah and at history as a real 'testing ground' which proves the accuracy of the teachings of the Prophets.

So, that is the man of the Holy Qur'an, and these are some of the duties which have been prescribed by Islam for him.

The Holy Qur'an has discussed so many subjects that it is not possible to enumerate all the topics discussed by it. However at a cursory glance the following questions come to the view:

- Allah, His essence, His oneness, His positive and negative attributes, that is the qualities which we should believe that He possesses and the qualities which we should believe that He is free from them.
- The Hereafter, the Resurrection and the stages between death and Resurrection (Purgatory).
- Angels, that is the powers that are conscious of themselves and of their Creator and are the executors of the Divine will.,

- Prophets or the men who received the Divine revelation in their hearts and conveyed it to other people.

- Exhortation to have belief in Allah, in the Hereafter, in the angels, in the Prophets and in the revealed Books.

- Creation of the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the rivers, the plants, the animals, the clouds, the rain, the hailstones, the meteors etc.

- Call for the worship of Allah, the One, wholeheartedly and for not associating any person or thing with Him. The prohibition of the worship of anything other than Allah whether it is a man, an angel, the sun, a star or an idol.

- Remembering the blessings and the bounties bestowed by Allah in this world.

- Eternal favours of Allah to the virtuous in the next world and severe and sometimes eternal punishment meted out by Him to the evil-doers.

- Arguments in respect of Allah, Resurrection, Prophets etc. and some prophecies in this connection.

- Narration of the stories and historical events proving the truth of the mission of the Prophets and showing that happy was the end of those virtuous people who followed the Prophets and unhappy of those who repudiated them.

- Piety, virtuousness and self-purification. n Attention to the danger of fiendish insinuations, self-delusion and incorrect thinking.

- Individual moral virtues such as courage, perseverance, patience, justice, charity, love, remembrance of Allah, love of Allah, expressing gratitude to Allah, fear of Allah, trust in Allah, resignation to the will of Allah, submission to the commands of Allah, prudence, knowledge, truthfulness, honesty and luminousness of heart as the result of piety, veracity and honesty.

- Collective moral virtues such as unity, urging each other to accept the truth, asking each other to be steadfast, mutual cooperation in the matters of virtue and piety, abstention from hatred and malice, exhortation to what is good, restraining fromevil and sacrificing life and property for the sake of Allah.

- Rules of law regarding such matters as prayers, fasting, zakat, khums, hajj, jihad, vow, oath, sale, mortgage, hire, gift, marriage, rights of the husband and wife, rights of the

parents and children, divorce, oath of condemnation, zihar, bequest, inheritance, retaliation, punishment, debt, evidence, wealth, property, government, consultation, rights of the poor, rights of society etc.

- Events and incidents which took place during the 23 years of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet.
- A description of the distinguishing features and high endowments of the Holy Prophet.
- Complete description of the three groups of the believers, the disbelievers and the hypocrites of every age.
- Characteristics of the believers, the disbelievers and the hypocrites of the time of the Holy Prophet.
- Invisible beings other than the angels, the jinn and the Devil.
- Characteristics of the Holy Qur'an itself.
- Glorification of Allah by all things existing in the world and their inner consciousness of the existence of their Creator.
- World, its laws, its transitoriness, and its unsuitableness for being the ideal of man. Only Allah, the Hereafter and the eternal world are fit to be the ultimate aim.
- Miracles of the Prophets.
- Confirmation of the former revealed Books, especially the Tawrat (Torah) and the Injil (Evangel). Rectification of the alterations and errors which have crept into these Books.

Vastness of Meanings

This was a brief description of the contents of the Holy Qur'an. Brief though it is, it can by no means be claimed to be even briefly adequate.

Even if we take into consideration these few subjects concerning man and his duties, the world and Allah, no human book about man, can be compared to the Holy Qur'an, especially in view of the fact that the Holy Quran was revealed through an illiterate person not conversant with the ideas of any thinker, or intellectual. The environment in which he lived was primitive and pagan. The people around him were mostly uncultured.

The Holy Qur'an for the first time introduced many vast and meaningful subjects, and presented them in such a manner that subsequently the philosophers, the lawyers, the jurists, the moralists and the historians were inspired by them.

It is not possible even for the most genius person to think of all these ideas at a level that they may impress the most eminent intellectuals. This is the position, if we suppose that what the Holy Qur'an has presented is of the same level as of that which has been produced by the human scholars. But we know definitely that in most cases the Holy Quran has opened absolutely new horizons.

Allah in the Holy Quran

Here we refer to only one topic. It is that of Allah and His relation with the world and man.

If we consider only how the Holy Qur'an has dealt with this question and compare what the Holy Qur'an has said in this respect, with the ideas put forward by the human beings, the miraculousness of the Holy Qur'an becomes crystal clear.

The Holy Quran has described Allah as free from all defects and all qualities not worthy of Him. On the other hand it has ascribed to Him all high attributes and mentioned His most beautiful names. There are some 15 verses in which Allah has been declared to be free from defects and drawbacks, and more than 50 verses in which His high attributes and most beautiful names have been mentioned.

The Holy Qur'an is so precise in its description of Allah that its exposition has astonished the scholars of divinity.

This in itself is a clear miracle of an unschooled and illiterate person. The Holy Quran has suggested all possible ways leading to the recognition of Allah. They include the study of the world and man, self-purification, and deep and careful consideration of life and existence. The most eminent philosophers of Islam admit that their strongest arguments have been inspired by the Holy Qur'an.

According to the Holy Qur'an the relation of Allah with the world and the creation stands purely on the basis of monotheism. In other words, in regard to His actions and will Allah has neither a rival nor a partner. On the other hand all the actions, intentions and choices of all others are determined and destined by Him.

Man's Relation with Allah

The Holy Qur'an has most beautifully described man's relation with Allah. Unlike the deity of the philosophers, Allah of the Holy Quran is not a dry and spiritless being having nothing to

do with mankind. Allah of the Holy Qur'an is closer to man than his jugular vein. His relation with man is that of 'give and take'. He gets pleased with man on reciprocal basis. He draws man to Himself and gives him solace. The Holy Qur'an says: **"Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."** (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:28)

Not only man but all things want Him and call Him. All existing things from the inmost of their existence are in communication with Him. They praise Him and glorify Him:

"There is nothing that does not celebrate His praise, though you do not understand their praise." (Surah Bani Isra'il,17:44)

The deity of the philosophers, whom they call simply the 'First Cause' or the "Necessarily Existing Being", has nothing to do with man except that He has created him and put him in this world. But Allah of the Holy Quran is an object of love and the most wanted Being. He fills man with enthusiasm and induces him to make sacrifice. For His sake man often passes sleepless nights and restless days, for He becomes his most holy ideal.

Because of their familiarity with the Holy Qur'an, the Muslim philosophers were able to promote their theology to the highest level by introducing Qur'anic conceptions into it.

Is it possible that an unlettered, unschooled and an illiterate person should be in the matters of divinity thousands years ahead of such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle?

Quran, Tawrat and Injil

The Holy Qur'an confirmed the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible, but said that alterations had occurred in those Books and that betraying human hands had played with them. The Holy Qur'an has rectified some of the errors which had crept in these Books in the matters of theology, stories and some of the rules of law. An example of these errors is the story of the Forbidden Tree and the mistake (sin) of Adam as mentioned by us earlier.

The Holy Qur'an has repudiated such silly stories as that of the wrestling of God and has declared that the Prophets are free from the improper things ascribed to them in the former Books. This in itself is a proof of the truth of the Holy Quran.

Historical Stories

The Holy Qur'an recounted some historical stories of which the people of that age knew nothing. Even the Holy Prophet himself was unaware of them. The Qur'an says: **"Neither you knew it nor your people."** (Surah Hud, 11:49)

Not a single person among the Arab claimed that he knew the stories in question. While

narrating these stories the Holy Qur'an did not follow the Bible, but gave a modified version of them. The researches of the modern historians in respect of the people of Sheba and the tribe of Thamud have confirmed the version of the Holy Quran.

The Holy Qur'an and Predictions

The Quraysh were very happy when in 615 AD Iran defeated the Romans. On this occasion the Holy Quran firmly said that in a period of less than 10 years the Romans would again defeat Iran. On this question some idolaters betted against the Muslims. But later events proved the truth of the Holy Qur'an and everything happened as was predicted by it. Similarly the Holy Qur'an firmly foretold that the man who calls the Holy Prophet 'without offspring' is himself 'without offspring'. At that time that man had seven children, but within two or three generations his offspring ceased to exist.

All this shows that the Holy Quran is miraculous and inimitable. There are a number of other remarkable points which prove its miraculousness on the intellectual level. They are related to natural sciences, philosophy and history.

Imamat - Leadership

In his papers entitled the Notes on Leadership and Administration the author has described very well the difference between Prophethood and Imamat. The first is guidance and the second is leadership. As a religious guide or Prophet is a sort of Divinely appointed guide, the same case is with a leader or an Imam. The Holy Prophet and some other Prophets have been both the guides and the leaders. But the end of Divine guidance does not mean the end of Divine leadership also.

The same notes say that Imamat and Prophethood are two different assignments and two different states. They are often separable. Many Prophets only conveyed revelations. They were not the Imams. Similarly the Imams of the Prophet's House have not been the Prophets. Anyhow, Ibrahim and Muhammad were the Prophets and the Imams both (Peace be upon them). The Qur'an says: **"I am going to Make you Imam for the people."** (Surah al Baqarah 2:124)

Our contention that Prophethood is guidance and Imamat is leadership has been derived from the Quran, which says: **"The Messenger has only to convey the message of Allah."** (Surah al Maidah 5:99)

But we know that the duty of an Imam is to supervise, to lead and to take care of those who accept his leadership.

According to the Shi'ah belief, as Prophethood is conferred by Allah, Imamat is also granted by Him. In this respect there is no difference between Prophethood and Imamat. The distinguished Prophets have been guides as well as leaders. The end of Prophethood means the end of Divine guidance in the sense of showing the way and delivering the message, but Divine leadership or Imamat shall never come to an end.

Difference Between Guidance and Leadership

According to one definition the leader is he who makes it easy for his followers to achieve the required goal. The guide on the other hand not only shows the way, but also often provides the means of traversing it and reaching the goal.

As a matter of fact a person may hold simultaneously both the assignments of a guide and a leader, or may hold only one of them. As we have already said, Prophethood is a sort of guidance and Imamat is a sort of leadership. It is possible that one person may be both a guide and a leader. It is also possible that someone may be only a guide and not a leader like all our genuine preachers. (Those whose preaching is not proper are out of question.) They themselves stand aside and show the pitfalls to others. Their responsibility ends there. In contrast, it is also possible that someone may be a leader, not a guide. That happens when the way is known and the goal has already been determined. In this case a leader is required to awaken the dormant forces, to mobilize them and to push them forward. Similarly it is also possible that one person may be a leader and a guide both.

Imamat of the Holy Imams and the Tradition of Thaqalayn

The tradition (Hadith) of Thaqalayn is an authentic tradition reported by numerous authorities both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis. According to it the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "I leave among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my chosen descendants." [27]

This tradition has been usually used as a prelude to the narration of the misfortunes of the Holy Prophet's Chosen descendants. The preachers say: "This was the Holy Prophet's direction, but no sooner than he died. . . ." This description gives the impression that the members of the Holy Prophet's House were crushed and made totally ineffective. Though it is true that their services were not utilized as they should have been, yet it must be admitted that their presence was extraordinarily effective in the preservation of Islamic heritage. Of course the then government as well as Islamic politics deviated from their original course and the members of the Prophet's House could render no service in that field, but they so protected and kept alive the spiritual heritage of Islam and the Holy Prophet, that it remained safe even after the gradual decline and extinction of the Islamic caliphate.

Islam is a code of life which covers all affairs temporal and spiritual. It is not like the school of a moral teacher or a philosopher which can deliver to society nothing more than a few books and a few pupils. Islam besides being a moral and cultural school and a social and political system, is a new code of life and a new way of thinking. It practically brings new arrangements into existence. Islam preserves the spirit in the matter, the invisible in the visible, the life Hereafter in this world and finally the kernel in the husk and the husk in the kernel.

The deviation of the government from its original course rendered the institution of caliphate into mere husk. Outward formalities were kept intact, but the spirit of piety, truthfulness, justice, sincerity, love, equality and patronage of science and knowledge did not exist, especially during the Umayyad period when true knowledge was despised and discouraged. The only thing which was encouraged was poetry, pre-Islamic customs and boasting of one's ancestry. The result was that politics was separated from religiousness. In other words those

who represented spiritual heritage of Islam were not allowed to take part in political affairs and those who held political power were alien to the spirit of Islam, and carried out only its outward formalities such as congregational prayers and the appointment of the officials to perform Islamic duties. They were caliphs and the commanders of the faithful only in name. At last even this duality disappeared and the outward formalities were also gone. Even the form of government officially became pre-Islamic. Spirituality and religiousness were totally separated from politics. From here it can be understood that the biggest blow which was dealt to Islam began from the day that religion and politics were separated from each other. Though during the days of Abu Bakr and Umar religion and politics still to a certain extent went together, the seeds of their separation were sown during that period. The things so developed that Umar made repeated mistakes and Imam Ali corrected them. Fortunately Imam Ali was his regular adviser. The separation of religion and politics being the greatest threat, the well-wishers of Islam wanted to keep them together. The relation between these two is that of spirit and body. The body and spirit and the husk and kernel should remain united. The husk is required to protect the kernel from which it draws its strength. Islam gives importance to politics, government, political laws and jihad only for the purpose of protecting and preserving its spiritual heritage, that is monotheism, supremacy of spiritual and moral values, social justice, equality and regard for human sentiments. If this husk is separated from its kernel, the latter will be damaged and the former will become of no use.

The bold action which the Imams took was the protection of the spiritual heritage of Islam. They separated from Islam the institution of caliphate as it existed. The first Imam who took this action was Imam Husayn (AS). His uprising made it clear that Islam meant piety, recognition of Allah and self-sacrifice for His cause, not the values introduced by the Umayyad Caliphate.

Now let us see what the spiritual heritage of Islam means and how the Holy Imams have protected it. The Holy Quran says: **"The Prophet reads out to them Allah's verses, purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom"** (Surah Jumu'ah 62:2)

It also says: **"So that the people may establish justice."** (Surah al Hadid 57:25)

Again it says: **"We have sent you as a witness, a bringer of good tidings, a warner and one who calls to Allah with His permission."** (Surah al-Ahzab 33: 45)

The Imams first of all urged people to do what is good and abstain from that which is evil. The most extreme example of this sort of action is Imam Husayn's uprising. Secondly the Imams paid attention to disseminating knowledge. An example of this action is Imam Ja'far Sadiq's school, which produced such eminent scholars as Hisham, Zurarah and Jabir ibn Hayyan.

The same purpose was served by the Nahjul Balaghah, the Sahifah Sajjadiyah and the

disputations of all Imams, especially those of Imam Riza. Above all the Imams showed practical piety, asceticism, selflessness and benevolence. They passed their nights in worshipping Allah and helped the poor and the weak. They possessed the noble Islamic qualities of forgiveness, beneficence and humility. Their very sight reminded the people of the moral and spiritual qualities preached by Islam and the Holy Prophet. Imam Musa Kazim observed vigils in close vicinity to Harun's palace. Imam Riza, when he was still the heir apparent, declared: "Allah of all the people is the same, their father is the same and their mother is the same. None is superior to others except by virtue of piety." He took meals with the barber and the door-keeper and mixed freely with them.

The spiritual philosophy of Islam is the preservation of its moral and spiritual heritage and the retention of its kernel in contradistinction of its husk. The separation of spirituality from politics amounts to the separation of the kernel from its husk.

Imamat and Hadith of Thaqalayn

(i) The substance of this tradition is mutawatir, which means that it has been reported by numerous irreproachable authorities. Its wording may vary, but according to most of the reports it is as under: **"I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: The Book of Allah and my chosen descendants. So long as you adhere to them, you will never go astray. They will not be separated from each other till they come to me at the fountain."**

Once in an article published in an issue of the magazine, Risalatul Islam, the organ of the Dar ut-Taqrib Baynal Mazahibul Islamiya this tradition appeared thus: "I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah." Immediately, at the instance of the late Ayatullah Burujardi, a scholar of Qum, named Shaykh Qiwamuddin Wishnawahi wrote a treatise entitled Hadithuth Thaqalayn and sent it to the Darut-Taqrib which published it as a separate treatise.

In that treatise the sources of this tradition have been traced in the books of traditions, the commentaries of the Quran, biographies, historical books and dictionaries, in which this tradition has been mentioned for different reasons. For example it is mentioned in the commentaries of the Quran in connection with the verse: **"We will dispose of you O you Thaqalayan."** and in connection with the verses of 'I'tisam' (3:103), 'Mawaddat' (42:23) and 'Tathir' (33:33). In dictionaries it is mentioned in connection with the root-word, thaqal etc.

(ii) In the Holy Quran the word, thaqalayn has been used to signify the men and the jinn. Let us see what it signifies in this tradition.[28]

In connection with the tradition there are a few points worth mentioning. The first point is: Why have the Chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet been called thaqal?

The second point is: Why has the Quran been called the major thaqal and the chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet the minor thaqal? Some reports have these words: "One of them (the thaqals) is greater than the other."

The Holy Prophet was asked as to what he meant by the thaqalayn. He said: "The Book of Allah, the one end of which is in Allah's hand and the other end of which is in your hand, and my descendants who are the minor thaqal".

According to a certain report, he added: "They are the two ropes which will not break off till the Day of Resurrection."

(iii) The third important point in this connection is that the Holy Prophet has said that these two will not be separated. He did not mean to say that they will not part company with each other or that they will not be displeased with each other or that they will not quarrel. What is meant is that adherence to one of them is inseparable from adherence to the other. They cannot be separated by saying that the Quran is enough for us as Umar said in the early days of Islam or by saying that what has been reported to us from the Prophet's House is enough for us as the Akhbarists say. Incidentally some of the Shi'ah scholars are of this opinion.

(iv) The fourth point is that the Holy Prophet has guaranteed that those who really adhere to these two thaqa1s would never go astray and would not feel miserable.

The decline and deviation of the Muslims began when they tried to thrust a wedge between these two thaqals.

Now let us discuss why the law-giver has chosen to append something else to the revealed Book brought by him.

This question is related to the profundity and subtlety of the Quran, the law of which requires an interpreter and commentator. To illustrate this point it may be said that sometimes we import from a foreign country such simple goods as cloth, shoes or utensils. In this case we do not need any persons to come along with the goods to direct us how to use them. We can sew garments out of cloth, can use the utensils and put on the shoes. But sometimes we import a complete manufacturing plant. In that case it is necessary that some experts should come along with it to install it and operate it for a fairly long time till our own technicians are ready to operate it independently. Similarly when modern war equipment is imported, it should definitely be accompanied by technicians to teach its use.

We have heard that recently France has sold mirage aircraft to Libya, but it is said that the Libyan pilots will not be in a position to fly them at least for two years.

Hence the question of leadership in the sense of religious authority, to which the Holy

Prophet has referred in this authentic tradition, is nothing but a stress on the fact that it is not enough to know Arabic in the ordinary sense to be able to interpret the Qur'an, to understand its aims and to explain its injunctions and moral rules. We know how the literal interpretation of the tradition which says that you will see your Lord on the Day of Resurrection as you see the moon when it is full, led to gross deviation and anthropomorphic conceptions.

To say that the Book of Allah is enough for us culminates in either Ash'arism or Mu'tazilaism, each of which was a heretical school of thought.

Our twelve Imams are the Qur'anic technicians. Their knowledge does not belong to the world of senses. It is Divinely inspired or at least especially acquired knowledge. Imam Ali once addressing Kumayl said: "Knowledge with real insight came to them unexpectedly. They experienced the satisfaction of conviction. They found easy what those living in luxury considered to be difficult, and they were on intimate terms with that, of which the ignorant were afraid." (See Nahjul Balagha, Saying 146)

Imam Ali says: "The chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet keep his trust and abide by his orders. They are a treasure of his knowledge, a sanctuary of his wisdom, an archive of his Books and a support of his religion. With their help he straightened his back and gained his composure. None from among his ummah (followers) can be compared to them. Those who received their favours cannot be equal to them. They are the basis of religion and the pivot of faith. To them return those who go astray and those who lag behind, join them for guidance and salvation. They are efficiently capable and fit for the status of leadership; they have been and are even now rightful heirs of the Holy Prophet who had entrusted them Imamate." (Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 2)

"Through us you were guided in the darkness and were able to set your foot on the highway. With our help you came into the light of the dawn from the darkness of the late night. Deaf be the ear that does not listen to the cry (advice) of the guide." (Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 4) (This sermon was delivered by Imam Ali after Talhah and Zubayr were killed).

"You will not be observing the covenant of the Qur'an unless you know who violated it and you will not be adhering to it unless you know who threw it away. Therefore seek this information of those who have it, for they are the life of knowledge and the death of ignorance. It is they whose judgement will tell you of their knowledge, whose silence will tell you of their speech and whose outward appearance will tell you of their inward feelings. They do not do anything that is against religion nor is their opinion divided about it. Therefore religion is their true witness and a silent speaker." (Nahjul Balagha -Sermon 147)

(The words "that they do not do anything against religion", indicate the infallibility of the Imams and the words, "their opinion is not divided" show that the Imams possess profound knowledge.)

"They are life of knowledge and death of ignorance. Their gentleness speaks of their knowledge and their silence of the wisdom of their speech. They neither oppose the truth (as they are infallible) nor have they divided opinion about it, (as their knowledge is sound and correct). They are pillars of Islam and the place where it is safe. Through them the truth was restored to its position, the falsehood was displaced and its tongue was cut off. They understand religion and take care of it. They do not merely hear it and pass it on. The transmitters of knowledge are many, but its adherents are very few." (See Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 239).

"A time will come after me when nothing will be more hidden than truth and more manifest than falsehood. At that time the Quran and the people of the Quran will be the rejected outcasts. The Qur'an and its guardians (Ahlul Bayt) which are like two companions going together in the same path, will not be accommodated by anyone. At that time they will be among the people, but no one will seek guidance from them, and they will be with the people, but not really with them." (Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 147)

[27] In this connection a reference may be made to Shaykh Qawam Wishnawahi's treatise appended to Risalatul Islam and to the Biharul Anwar, an account of the Prophet's life.

[28] Shaykh Qiwamuddin says that this tradition has been reproduced in Sahih Muslim, Vol. VII, p. 122, Sunan Tirmizi, Vol. II, p. 307, Sunan Abu Da'ud, Vol. V, pp. 182, 189; Mustadrak Hakim, Vol. III, pp. 14, 17, 26, 59, Vol. VI, pp. 366, 371, Vol. V, pp. 182, 189; Mustadrak Hakim, Vol. III, p. 109, Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd, Vol. IV, p. 8; Usudul Ghabah, Vol. II, p.12, Vol. III, p. 147 and Ibn Abil Hadid.

Significance of Imamat

The subject of our present discussion is Imamat. We know that for us, the Shi'ah though it is a question of extraordinary importance, other Muslim sects do not attach so much importance to it. The reason is that the conception of Imamat which we have is different from that conception of it which other sects have. There is no doubt that there are some common features too, but those features of Imamat, which have given extraordinary importance to it, are peculiar to the Shi'ah creed. For example when we, the Shi'ah want to enumerate the cardinal principles of religion according to the Shi'ah doctrine, we say that these principles are Monotheism, Prophethood, Divine Justice, Imamat and the Hereafter. We regard Imamat as a cardinal principle of religion. In a sense the Sunnis also do not reject the idea of Imamat totally, but according to their belief, Imamat is not a cardinal principle of religion. They regard it only as a collateral matter. In fact there exists a basic difference of opinion with regard to Imamat. We believe in one sort of Imamat and the Sunnis believe in another sort of it. The reason why the Shi'ah regard Imamat as a cardinal principle of religion whereas the Sunnis regard it as a collateral matters, is that the Shi'ah conception of Imamat is quite different from the Sunni conception of it.

The Meaning of Imam

Imam means a leader or one who goes in front. The word Imam in Arabic does not imply any sense of sanctity. And Imam is the person who has some followers irrespective of the fact whether he is virtuous or depraved. The Quran itself has used the word in both the senses. At one place it says: **"We appointed them Imams who guide with our permission."** (Surah Anbiya, 21:73)

At another place it says: **"The Imams who invite people to the Hell."** (Surah al Qasas, 28:41)

In respect of Fir'awn the Quran has used a phrase which conveys a sense similar to that of an Imam or a leader. It says: **"On the Day of Judgement he will lead his people down into the Hell fire."** (Surah Hud, 11:98)

Thus Imam literally means simply a leader. But at present we are not concerned with a bad leader. Let us now discuss the conception of Imamat.

The word Imamat is applied to several cases. Some concepts of it are acknowledged by the Sunnis also. But they differ with us as to who is an Imam and what qualities he must possess. They totally disbelieve in certain concepts of Imamat. It is not that they believe in Imamat in the sense in which we believe but disagree as to the person who holds this assignment. The Imamat in which they believe is nothing but social leadership and this is the sense in which this word has been used in the books of the old scholastic theologians.

Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi in at-Tajrid defines Imamat as general charge of society. Here it seems necessary to mention another point also:

Various Aspects of the Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet in his lifetime by virtue of his special position in Islam had several aspects as is indicated by the Qur'an and his own life account. At one and the same time he held several assignments. In the first instance he was a Prophet of Allah and in this capacity he conveyed, Allah's message and commandments to the people. The Holy Quran says:

"**Whatever the Messenger gives, take it, and whatever he forbids abstain from it."** (Surah al Hashr, 59:7)

In other words, whatever instructions and orders the Prophet gives to the people, he gives them on behalf of Allah.

From this point of view the Prophet communicates only that which has been revealed to him. Another assignment of the Holy Prophet was that he held the post of the supreme judge, by virtue of which he administered justice among the Muslims. According to Islam every Tom, Dick and Harry cannot be a judge, for from the viewpoint of Islam arbitration is a Divine affair. Allah has enjoined justice and a Judge is the person who administers it in cases of disputes and differences. This assignment was also expressly conferred on the Holy Prophet by the Qur'an, which says: **"By your Lord, they will not believe in truth until they make you judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which you decide and submit to your decision whole-heartedly."** (Surah an Nisa, 4:65)

The Holy Prophet was appointed a judge by Allah and hence this assignment was not an ordinary one; it was Divine. Practically also he was the Prophet-judge. The third assignment which he officially held and which was conferred on him by the Quran was that of the head of the State. He was the head of the State and leader of Muslim society. In other words in Muslim society he was the policy maker as well as the administrator. It is believed that it is this aspect of the Holy Prophet which is visualized by the Quranic verse: **"Believers, obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and your (qualified) leaders."** (Surah an Nisa, 4:59)

In fact, the three positions held by the Holy Prophet were not merely formal or ceremonial. The directions which we have received from him are basically of three kinds.

(i) The first kind comprises Divine revelations, in regard to which the Holy Prophet could do nothing of his own accord. His sole function was to convey to the people what was revealed to him.

(ii) In the field of religious instructions, for example, he told the people how to offer prayers and keep fast. But when he administered justice his judgements were not revealed. In the case of a dispute between two persons, he decided the matter according to the Islamic standards and judged who was right and who was wrong. In such a case Jibra'il did not bring any revelation to him. Exceptional cases are a different matter. On the whole he decided all judicial cases on the basis of available evidence in the same way as others do. At the most it may be said that his judgements were better than those of others. He himself said that he had orders to pronounce judgement on the basis of what appears to be specious. Suppose a plaintiff and a respondent appear and the plaintiff produces two irreproachable witnesses. The Prophet would decide the case on the basis of their evidence. Evidently this judgement will be the Prophet's own judgement and not a judgement revealed to him.

(iii) In this third capacity also when the Prophet issued an order as the leader of society, the nature of this order of his was different from the nature of what he conveyed as Divine revelation. Allah appointed the Holy Prophet the leader of society and authorized him to work as such. In this capacity he sometimes consulted others also. We see that he consulted his companions on the occasion of the Battles of Badr and Uhud and on many other occasions. Evidently there can be no consultation about a Divinely revealed order. The Holy Prophet never consulted his companions as to how the dusk time (Magrib) prayers should be offered. There have been occasions when the Holy Prophet said about certain questions referred to him that Allah had commanded thus and hence he had to abide by His command. But on matters in which he had received no Divine injunction, he often consulted others and asked for their opinion. If in such cases he issued his own orders, he did so because he was authorized by Allah to do so. In a few cases connected with social administration also he received revelation, but those were exceptional cases. Otherwise as a rule he did not receive any detailed instructions on social and political questions and he did not work as a mere messenger in respect of these questions. It is an undisputed fact that the Holy Prophet worked in all these capacities concurrently.

Imamat in the Sense of Leadership of Society

The first meaning of Imamat as mentioned above is the general charge of society. One of his assignments which fell vacant on the demise of the Holy Prophet, was the leadership of society. There is no doubt that society needs a leader. Who was the leader of society after the Holy Prophet? Both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree that society is in need of a leader and a

supreme commander. It is here that the question of Khilafat arises. The Shi'ah say that the Holy Prophet himself nominated his successor and announced that after him Imam Ali would take the reins of the affairs of the Muslims in his hands. The Sunnis who have a different logic do not accept this view at least in the form in which the Shi'ah accept it. According to them the Holy Prophet did not designate any particular person as his successor and it was the duty of the Muslims themselves to elect their leader. The Sunnis accept the principle of Imamat when they say that the Muslims need a leader. All that they say is that the leader was to be chosen by the Muslims. In contrast, the Shi'ah claim that the Holy Prophet himself appointed his successor by Divine revelation.

Had the question of Imamat been merely that of political leadership after the Holy Prophet, we the Shi'ah also should not have regarded it as a cardinal principle of religion. It would have been fit to include this question in the collateral matters. We could say that the question of Imamat in which the Shi'ah believe is confined to declaring that Imam Ali was one of the companions of the Holy Prophet like Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and so many others or even like Abuzar and Salman, but he was better, more learned, more pious and more capable than all of them and that the Prophet designated him to be his successor. But the Shi'ah do not stop here. They believe in two tenets in which the Sunnis do not share with them at all. One of these two tenets is Imamat in the sense of religious authority.

Imamat in the Sense of Religious Authority

We have said that the Holy Prophet conveyed the Divine revelations received by him to the people who were at liberty to ask him whatever they wanted to know about the teachings of Islam. Similarly they asked of him what they did not find in the Qur'an. Now the question is whether what the Qur'an contains and what the Holy Prophet has told the general people is all that Islam wanted to convey of its instructions; teachings and knowledge? Evidently the Holy Prophet did not have time enough to convey all the teachings of Islam. Therefore, he trained Imam Ali, his successor as an extraordinary scholar and taught him everything about Islam, at least all the principles and the general rules of it. Imam Ali was the most outstanding of his companions. He was infallible like himself, and knew even that which was not expressly told by Allah.

Introducing him, the Holy Prophet said: "0' People, after me refer all religious questions to Ali and ask him and my other successors whatever you want to know." In this respect Imamat is a sort of specialization in Islam, but an extraordinary and Divine specialization, far above the degree of the specialization which a mujtahid (jurist) can acquire. The Imams are experts in Islam but their special knowledge of it is not derived from their own thinking and reason which are liable to commit mistakes. They receive their knowledge in a mysterious and secret way unknown to us. Imam Ali received his knowledge of Islamic sciences direct from the Holy Prophet and the subsequent Imams received it through him. In the case of each Imam this knowledge was infallible and impeccable. It was handed down by each Imam to the subsequent Imams.

The Sunnis do not believe that anybody holds such a position. In other words they do not believe in the existence of any Imam in this sense. It is not that they do not accept Ali as an Imam but say that Abu Bakr is an Imam instead of him. In fact they do not admit that any of the companions of the Holy Prophet, neither Abu Bakr, nor Umar nor Uthman, holds such a position. That is why they attribute so many mistakes in religious matters to Abu Bakr and Umar. In contrast the Shi'ah believe their Imams to be infallible, and will never admit that any of their Imams has ever committed a mistake. But the Sunnis in their books say that on such and such occasion Abu Bakr said so, but he was wrong. When he realized his mistake he said that he had a Satan (Devil) who overwhelmed him from time to time. Similarly the Sunnis say that once Umar made a mistake and then referring to certain women declared that they were more learned than him.

It is said that when Abu Bakr died the women of his family, including his daughter - the Holy Prophet's wife, 'Ayishah began to weep and cry. When Umar heard the din of their lamentation, he sent a message to the women, asking them to be quiet, but they did not comply with his request. He again sent a message and then threatened to punish them. At last 'Ayishah was told by some women that Umar was threatening them and asking them to become quiet. She sent for Umar and when he came to her asked him what he wanted to say and why he was sending a message after message. Umar said that he had heard the Holy Prophet saying: "If any one died and his people wept over him, he would be punished." 'Ayishah said: "You haven't understood. You are mistaken. That's a different matter. I know what's that. Once a wicked Jew died. His folk were weeping over him. The Holy Prophet said that they were weeping and he was being punished. The Holy Prophet did not say that he was being punished because they were weeping. He said that they were weeping over him, but didn't know that he was being punished. What connection has it with this question? Even if weeping be prohibited, why should Allah punish an innocent person for the sin which we commit?" "Strange! said Umar. "Was that the case"? "Yes", said 'Ayishah, "that was the case". Umar said: "Hadn't these women been there, Umar would have been ruined."

The Sunnis themselves say that on seventy (very many) occasions Umar said: "Had there not been Ali, Umar would have been ruined." He himself confessed on so many occasions that Ali often rectified his mistakes, and Umar used to confess his mistakes.

In short, the Sunnis do not believe in any Imam in the sense in which we believe. Anyhow it is an indisputable fact that it was the Holy Prophet alone who received the celestial revelation. We do not say that revelation is received by the Imams also. The message of Islam was delivered to mankind by the Holy Prophet alone and to him alone Allah revealed all the necessary teachings of Islam. There are no injunctions of Islam which were not revealed to him. But the question whether all injunctions of Islam were conveyed to the people at large, is a different matter. The Sunnis say that the Holy Prophet conveyed all Islamic injunctions to his companions. But still the Sunnis find themselves in a fix when they face problems about which nothing has been reported from the companions of the Holy Prophet. To resolve this

situation they have introduced the law of analogy, by means of which they claim that they complete what is missing. In this connection Imam Ali says: "Do you mean to say that Allah's religion was incomplete and you have come to complete it?" (See Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 18)

The Shi'ah on the other hand say that neither Allah revealed the Islamic injunctions incompletely to the Holy Prophet, nor did the Holy Prophet convey them incompletely to the people. He conveyed them completely but he did not say everything to the general people. In fact many questions did not arise during his lifetime. Anyhow, he conveyed all injunctions which he received from Allah to his special disciple, Imam Ali and asked him to pass them on to the people as and when necessary.

It is here that the question of infallibility arises. The Shi'ah say that just as the Holy Prophet could be neither intentionally nor unintentionally wrong in what he said, similarly his special pupil Imam Ali also could not go wrong, for just as the Holy Prophet was backed by Divine support in many ways, this special pupil of his also enjoyed Divine support. This was one more feature of Imamat.

Imamat in the Sense of Wilayat

This is the third sense of Imamat and the highest sense for that matter. Great stress is laid on this sense in the Shi'ah doctrine In a way Wilayat is a common point between Shi'ism and mysticism (tasawwuf). But when we say so, we should not be misunderstood, for you may come across what the orientalists have said in this respects. They say that Wilayat is a question in which the mystics are greatly interested and which has been of interest for the Shi'ah also from the early days of Islam. I remember that some ten years back an orientalist interviewed Allama Tabatabi. One of the questions he put was whether the Shi'ah had borrowed the idea of Wilayat from the mystics or the mystics had taken it from the Shi'ah. The fact is that the doctrine of Wilayat existed among the Shi'ah even when mysticism had not emerged yet. If it is supposed that either of these two have borrowed the idea from the other, it must be said that the mystics have adopted it from the Shi'ah. The question of Wilayat is analogous to the questions of the perfect man and the master of the time. The mystics have laid great stress on this point. Moulavi says that in every age there exists a wali, qa'im or the master of the age. In every age there exists a perfect man possessing all human qualities. There is no age in which, a perfect wali, often described as 'qutb' (pole, pivot, authority) is not present. The mystics believe that a perfect wali is also a perfect men. They ascribe to him many positions some of which are unintelligible to us. One of his positions is his control of the hearts in the sense that he is the universal spirit transcending all spirits. Moulavi hints at this position in his story of Ibrahim Adham. This story is no more than a fictitious tale. But Moulavi narrates tales to make his points clear. His aim is not to narrate history. He tells a story only to press his point. Moulavi says that Ibrahim Adham went to the river and threw a needle into it. Afterwards he recalled the needle. The fish put their heads out

of the river. Each fish had a needle in its mouth. Continuing, Maulavi says: '0 you having no endowments, take care of your heart in the presence of those who are gifted with the qualities of heart.'

Continuing further he says: "That Shaykh (spiritual guide) became aware of that which was in the heart of the other people. The Shaykh could know that because he was like a lion and the hearts of other people were his dens."

The Shi'ah generally use the word Wilayat in its most exalted sense. They believe that the Wali and Imam is the master of the time, and there has always been and there will always be one perfect man in the world . In most of the ziyarats (homages) which we recite, we acknowledge the existence of Wilayat and Imamat in this sense, and believe that the Imam has a universal spirit. In the ziyarats which we all recite and which we regard as a part of Shi'ah doctrine we say: "I testify that you see where I stand; you hear what I say and return my salutation." It is to be noted that we address that to an Imam who is dead. From our point of view in this respect there is no difference between a dead and a living Imam. It is not that we say so to a dead Imam only. We say: "Peace be on you, Ali ibn Musa al-Riza. I admit and testify that you hear my salutation and return it."

The Sunnis with the exception of the Wahhabis, believe that only the Holy Prophet is endowed with this quality of knowing and hearing. According to them nobody else in the world occupies such a high spiritual status and has such a spiritual comprehension. But we, the Shiites believe that this position is held by all our Imams. This belief is a part of our religious principles and we always acknowledge it.

In short the question of Imamat has three degrees and if we do not make a distinction between these degrees, we may be faced with difficulties in respect to certain inferences in this connection. Based on these degrees Shiism has three groups. Some Shiites believe in Imamat only in the sense of social and political leadership of society. They say that the Holy Prophet designated Imam Ali to the leadership of society after him, and that Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman could not claim this position. These people are Shiites only to this extent. They either do not believe in the two further degrees or keep quiet about them. Some others believe in the second degree also but do not believe in the third one. It is said that the late Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Durchal who was Ayatullah Burujardi's teacher in Isfahan, disbelieved in this third degree. Anyhow, the majority of the Shi'ah and the Shi'ah scholars believe in the third degree also.

If we want to discuss Imamat, we should discuss it in three stages: Imamat according to the Qur'an, Imamat according to the tradition and Imamat according to reason. First of all let us see whether the Quranic verses relating to Imamat indicate that sense of Imamat in which the Shi'ah believe. And if they do so, do they indicate Imamat in the sense of political and social leadership only, or do they indicate it in the sense of religious authority and spiritual Wilayat

also. After explaining this we should see what do the Prophetic traditions say about Imamat. Finally we should analyse Imamat from the viewpoint of reason and see what reason says about each stage of it. Is the Sunni point of view that the Holy Prophet's successor should be elected by the people more reasonable or is it a fact that the Holy Prophet himself has nominated his successor? Similarly what is agreeing to reason in regard to the other two sense of Imamat.

A Tradition about Imamat

Before mentioning the verses of the Qur'an in regard to Imamat. We would like to quote a tradition which has been reported by the Shi'ah as well as the Sunnis. Normally a tradition upon which both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree cannot be ignored, because this agreement shows that the tradition is substantially authentic, though its wording may differ in different reports. We the Shiites usually report this tradition in the following words: "He who dies without recognizing the Imam of his time, would die a pre-Islamic death." These are very serious words, for in the pre-Islamic period people neither believed in the unity of Allah (monotheism) nor in Prophethood. This tradition (hadith) is found in most of the Shi'ah books of traditions including the Kafi which is regarded as the most reliable collection of the Shi'ah traditions. The important fact is that this tradition is found in the Sunni books also. According to one report they quote the following wording: "He who dies without an Imam, will die a pre-Islamic death." Another wording is this: "He who dies and has no bayah (oath of allegiance) in his neck, will die a pre-Islamic death." Still another text says: "He who dies and has no Imam, will die a pre-Islamic death." There are several other versions, and that shows the great importance which the Holy Prophet attached to the question of Imamat.

Those who take Imamat only in the sense of social leadership say that the Holy Prophet has attached utmost importance to the question of leadership because the implementation of the Islamic injunctions depends on the presence of a virtuous and sound leader and the strong allegiance of people to him. Islam is not an individualistic religion. Nobody can say that as he believes in Allah and His Prophet, he has nothing to do with anybody else. Everybody must know and understand who the Imam of his time is, and must carry out his activities under his leadership.

Those who take Imamat in the sense of religious authority, say that he who is interested in his religion, must recognize his religious authority and must know whom he should follow in religious matters. It is absolutely un-Islamic to believe in the religion but to acquire it from a source which is contrary to it.

Those who believe in Imamat in the sense of spiritual Wilayat say that this tradition shows that a man who is not under the care of a perfect wali (guardian) is just like him who died in pre-Islamic days. As this tradition is a mutawatir hadith (reported by continuity of numerous authorities) we mentioned it first so that you may keep it in mind while we discuss the

question of Imamat further. Now we look at the verses of the Qur'an.

Imamat in the Holy Qur'an

Several verses of the Qur'an are cited by the Shi'ah in connection with Imamat. One of them is the verse which begins with the words, **"Your guardian can be only Allah".** Incidentally in all these cases there exist Sunni traditions which support the Shi'ah point of view. In the Qur'an this verse runs as follows: **"Your guardian can be only Allah and His messenger and those who believe, who establish prayers, pay the zakat while bowing."** (Surah Mai'dah, 5:55)

The word used in this verse is Wali, which means a guardian. Hence Wilayat means guardianship. According to the teachings of Islam zakat is not paid while bowing in prayers. Hence the payment of zakat while bowing cannot be called a general rule applicable to many individuals. This verse refers to a particular incident, which took place only once and which has been reported both by the Shi'ah and the Sunnis. Once Imam Ali was bowing while offering prayers when a beggar appeared and began to ask for alms. Imam Ali beckoned and called his attention to his finger. The beggar promptly drew Imam Ali's ring from his finger and left the place. In other words Imam Ali did not wait till his prayers were finished. He was so particular to give alms, that while he was still praying he told the beggar by gesture that he might pull out his ring, sell it and spend the money to meet his needs. Both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree that Imam Ali did so, and that this verse was revealed on this occasion. It may be noted that giving alms while bowing in prayers is not included in the teachings of Islam. It is neither an obligatory nor a commendable act. Hence it cannot be said that several persons might have done so. Therefore (those who do so) is an obvious reference to Imam Ali. The Qur'an at several places has used the expression, 'they say. . .', while that thing was said by only one individual. Here also 'those who do so' means the individual who did so. Therefore by means of this verse Imam Ali was appointed the guardian of the people. Anyway, this verse needs further discussion, which we are going to undertake later.

There are other verses which concern the event of Ghadir. This event itself is a part of the Islamic traditions, but we are going to discuss it later. One of the verses revealed in connection with the event of Ghadir says: **"0 Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message."** (Surah al-Mai'dah, 5:67)

The tone of this verse is as serious as that of the tradition: "He who died and did not recognize the Imam of his time, died a pre-Islamic death." Briefly it may be said that the verse itself shows that its subject is so important that if the Prophet does not make it known, that would mean that he has not conveyed the message of Allah at all.

The Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree that Surah al-Mai'dah is the last surah (chapter) revealed to

the Holy Prophet, and this verse is one of the last verses of this surah. In other words it was revealed when the Holy Prophet had already conveyed all other injunctions and teachings of Islam during his 13 years' stay in Makkah and 10 years' stay in Medina as the Prophet. This verse was among the last instructions of Islam. Now the Shi'ah ask what that instruction could be which was so important that if it was not conveyed all that the Holy Prophet did in the past would become void. You cannot indicate any subject connected with the last years of the Holy Prophet's life which may be so important. But we say that it is the question of Imamat, which is so important that if Imamat is lost, nothing remains. Without Imamat the whole structure of Islam would crumble down. Moreover, the Shi'ah cite the reports and the traditions of the Sunnis themselves in support of their claim that this verse was revealed in connection with the Ghadir Khum event.

In Surah al-Ma'idah itself there is another verse which runs as follows: **"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour to you and have chosen Islam for you as religion."** (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:3)

This verse shows that on that day something happened, which was so important that it perfected religion, completed Allah's Favour to mankind and without which Islam could not be as Allah wanted it to be. The Shi'ah argue that the stringent tone of the verse shows that the thing to which it refers is so important that the very existence of Islam as a true religion depends on it. Now the question is what that thing can be. The Shi'ah say that they can point out that thing; whereas others cannot. Furthermore, there are reports which confirm that this verse was revealed in connection with the question of Imamat. We have put forward these three verses as the gist of the Shi'ah arguments.

Imamat and Expounding of Religion

We have already discussed the different aspects of Imamat, in the course of which we pointed out that in order to be able to discuss the question of Imamat in its true perspective, it was necessary to understand those aspects very clearly. One aspect of Imamat, as we have already said, is the question of government. Following the demise of the Holy Prophet whose duty was it to choose his successor? Was it the responsibility of the people themselves to elect their ruler from among themselves or did the Holy Prophet himself designate his successor? Lately this question has been put in such a way that at first sight the Sunni point of view in this respect appears to be more normal and natural.

Usually the question is set forth in this way: We want to see what form of government has been suggested by Islam. Is it hereditary in which every ruler designates his successor, and the people have no right to intervene in the government affairs? Is it that the Holy Prophet designated a particular person as his successor, that person designated his successor and that successor again designated his successor, and thus the constitution of government was to be based on designation and nomination till the Day of Resurrection? Naturally this process cannot be applicable exclusively to the Imams, for according to Shi'ah belief the number of the Imams is confined to twelve, and this number can neither be increased nor decreased. According to this view the general rule in respect of the government will boil down to this procedure. The Holy Prophet, who was the head of the State also, was to appoint his successor and that successor also in his turn was to appoint his successor and so on till the Day of Resurrection. In this case if Islam dominated the whole world as it once dominated the half of it and it so happened that the injunctions of Islam were observed in all parts of the world, the same rule would be operative whether there be one government in the world or several governments. According to this view, it was on the basis of the general rule that the Head of the State should be a designated person, that the Holy Prophet nominated Imam Ali as his successor. But in the light of this philosophy it is not necessary at all that the Holy Prophet should have designated Imam Ali on receiving a commandment from Allah, for only he and the Imams, inspired and endowed with Divine knowledge through the Holy Prophet, could receive such a Divine commandment, but that could not be the case subsequently. Therefore if it is admitted that from the viewpoint of Islam the government is to be based on the principle of designation, it was not necessary for the Holy Prophet to nominate Imam Ali by revelation. He could appoint him at his personal discretion. The Imams also could use their discretion similarly. On this basis Imam Ali's designation to Khilafat was similar to the appointment of a Governor of Makkah or the appointment of an Amirul Hajj. In such cases

nobody says that the Holy Prophet on receiving revelation appointed such and such person the Governor of Makkah or, for example, sent Mu'az bin Jabal to Yemen for the propagation of Islam. In contrast everybody admits that the Holy Prophet was entrusted by Allah with the charge of the administration of people, and so he was authorized to act according to his own discretion in all matters in which he did not receive a revelation. In the case of Imam Ali's designation to Khilafat also it may be said that this was the Holy Prophet's personal decision.

If we advance the question of Imamat in such a simple way, it becomes a question of worldly government and ceases to be the question of Imamat that we are discussing. If this be the nature of the question, really there is no need that Divine revelation should intervene in it. At the most Divine revelation can tell the Prophet that it is his duty to appoint as his successor whomsoever he deems fit, and that his successor also has to choose his successor in the same way. And so on till the Day of Resurrection. If Imamat simply means government or rulership, then what the Sunnis say appears to be more attractive than what the Shi'ah say, for the Sunnis hold that a ruler has no right to choose the next ruler and that his successor should be chosen in a democratic way by the people, especially by those who have right to choose. But the question is not so simple. On the whole the belief of the Shi'ah in the designation of Imam Ali and other Imams to Khilafat is an offshoot of another question which is more basic.

Here an important question arises. The question is that the number of the Imams was not more than twelve. As such who was supposed to take charge of government after these twelve Imams. Let us suppose that Imam Ali had become the ruler exactly in the manner he was designated by the Holy Prophet and had been followed by Imam Hasan, then by Imam Husayn and so on till the twelfth Imam. In this case on the basis of the philosophy which we, the Shi'ites have, there would have been no reason for the occultation of the present Imam. He also like his forefathers would have had a short span of life and then would have passed away. What would have happened after him. Could the number of the Imams be increased? Take another question - the question of the normal government in the present circumstances. Obviously the Imam of the Age cannot assume the political leadership of the Muslims during his occultation. Hence the question of political leadership and worldly government still remains unsolved.

Government is a Branch of Imamat

When the question of Imamat is discussed from the Shi'ah point of view, we should not make a mistake of simplifying it and saying that Imamat means administration of government, for it is such over-simplification that creates the above-mentioned difficulties. if it is admitted that Imamat means rulership, the question arises whether it is necessary that a candidate for becoming the Head of the State should be the best of all. Is it not enough that he should be the best only relatively. In other words, is it not enough that he should be a good statesman, a good administrator and an honest man, though he may be inferior to some people in some other respects? Is it necessary that a ruler should be infallible? What is the need of his being so? Is it necessary that he should be offering night prayers? If so, why? Is it necessary that he

should be well-versed in the rules of Islamic law? Cannot he consult others whenever necessary? A man who is relatively the best should be good enough. All these questions arise when we consider the problem from a narrow angle. It is a big mistake to think that Imamat and rulership are identical. Some early scholars, especially some scholastic theologians, made this mistake. Now-a-days again this mistake has become too common. When one speaks of Imamat, at once rulership comes to mind, while in fact the question of rulership is a minor part of the question of Imamat, and these two questions must not be confused. Then what is Imamat?

Imam is the Successor of the Holy Prophet in Expounding of Religion

What is most important in connection with the question of Imamat is the question as to who succeeded the Holy Prophet for the purpose of explaining and expounding religion. There is no doubt that it was the Holy Prophet alone who received revelation which was totally discontinued with his passing away. Now the question is who after the Holy Prophet was responsible for expounding celestial teachings which admitted no personal opinion or private judgement.

Did this responsibility devolve on any one particular individual to whom all queries could be referred as they were referred to the Holy Prophet, whose answers were always perfectly right and about whom it could not be suspected that he would even give an answer based on his personal opinion or would ever make a mistake and rectify it later? About the Holy Prophet we cannot say that any of his answers was ever wrong or influenced by his personal whim. Such an allegation would mean not to acknowledge his Prophethood. Once it is established that a particular thing was said by the Holy Prophet, we cannot say that it is wrong or that the Holy Prophet might have made a mistake. In contrast, in the case of a legislator to whose edicts people adhere, it is possible to say that in respect of such and such question he made a mistake or that he did not pay full attention to that particular question or that he was influenced by extraneous considerations. But it is not possible to say so in respect of the Holy Prophet, just as we cannot say about any verse of the Quran that there is a mistake in it or that it has been affected in any way by some selfish motive.

Was there any person after the Holy Prophet who could really be regarded as a competent authority for all religious matters and who could expound religious law in the same way as the Holy Prophet used to do? Did there exist a perfect man with all these characteristics. We say that such a man did actually exist. The only difference between him and the Holy Prophet was that what the Holy Prophet said was based on direct revelation from Allah and what the Imams said was based on what they learned from the Holy Prophet, not in the sense that they were instructed by him in the usual manner, but in the sense in which Imam Ali said that the Holy Prophet had opened to him a door of knowledge because of which a thousand other doors had been opened to him. We cannot say how it happened just as we cannot explain revelation and say how the Holy Prophet used to receive Divine knowledge direct from Allah.

We cannot say what kind of spiritual relationship existed between the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali, but it is certain that the Holy Prophet taught Imam Ali all realities fully and completely and that he did not impart that knowledge to anyone else. Imam Ali says that he was with the Holy Prophet in the cave of Hira when he heard a piteous sound as if someone was wailing. He said to the Holy Prophet: "Messenger of Allah, I heard the Satan's wailing when revelation was descending on you." He said: "Ali, you hear what I hear and you see what I see, but you are not a Prophet". (See Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 192)

Had there been somebody else in that place with Imam All, he would not have heard that voice, because that hearing was not the catching of sound waves reverberating in the space so that anybody having ears could hear it. It was a different sort of perception.

The Tradition of Thaqalayn

In regard to Imamat the basic question is its spiritual aspect. The Imams are spiritual leaders below the Prophet in ,rank. They know and acknowledge Islam spiritually. They are infallible like the Prophet himself. An Imam is an absolute authority on religion. There is no question of any mistake or any intentional deviation in what he says. That is what we mean by infallibility. In this connection the Shi'ah declare that the Holy Prophet has said: "I leave among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my descendants." (Sahih Muslim, Vol. VII, p. 122)

In fact, it cannot be denied that the Holy Prophet has actually said so. This is not a tradition reported by the Shi'ah only. In fact it has been reported by more Sunni sources than the Shi'ah.

When we were staying at Qum a magazine named Risalatut Taqrib was started by Darut Taqrib of Egypt. In one of its issues a Sunni scholar quoted the tradition of Thaqalayn in these words: "I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah." The late Ayatullah Burujardi, who was a scholar and divine in the real sense, dealt with such questions very prudently. One of his pupils was Shaykh Qawam Wishnawah'i, a nice man, much interested in studying books and collecting references.

The Late Ayatullah asked him to trace the sources of this tradition in the Sunni books in which this tradition might be found. Accordingly he collected such references and cited more than 200 reliable Sunni books, which had reported that the Holy Prophet had said: "I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my descendants." It is certain that the Holy Prophet expressed this point in this form on numerous occasions and at several places. But we cannot rule out the possibility of his having said on some occasion that he was leaving two things: the Book of Allah and his Sunnah. There is no inconsistency between the Holy Prophet's descendants and his Sunnah, for his Sunnah is explained by his descendants only. It is not that we can refer our problems either to the Holy Prophet's descendants or to his Sunnah, for these two do not exist independently of each other. It is the Holy Prophet's

descendants who are the expounders and custodians of his Sunnah. When the Holy Prophet mentions his descendants along with the Book of Allah, he means to say that his Sunnah is to be acquired from his descendants. Furthermore, even the statement that the Holy Prophet has said: "I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my descendants", itself is a Sunnah. As such there is no inconsistency between the Holy Prophet's Sunnah and his descendants. If at one place and even that is not certain, the Holy Prophet has said: "I am leaving among you two heavy trusts: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah", at so many other places he has used the other expression. If in one book this tradition is written in one form, in two hundred other books it is written in the other form.

Anyway, Shaykh Qawam prepared a treatise and sent it to Darut Taqrib of Egypt. Darut Taqrib too was not unfair. It printed and published it. Being authentic it could not be turned down. Nobody could raise any objection against it. Had the late Ayatullah Burujardi done what others usually do in such cases, he would have raised great hue and cry, would have called the people of Darut Taqrib dishonest and would have accused them of intriguing against the Prophet's chosen descendants.

The expounding of religion is the true spirit of Imamat. Islam is a comprehensive and bright religion. But the question is whether the teachings of Islam are limited to the principles and the general rules mentioned in the Qur'an and further elaborated and explained in the Holy Prophet's sayings. Was Islam only this much? There is no doubt that Divine revelation ceased with the Holy Prophet's demise. Islam was completed. But had every article of Islam been enunciated by that time? Or were there many questions of law which were in the custody of Imam Ali and which were still to be made known to the people and explained either gradually or on some suitable occasions? In the latter case this tradition proves the infallibility of the Imams, for the Holy Prophet has directed the Muslims to get their religion from two sources, the Book of Allah and his descendants. As one of these sources, that is the Qur'an is infallible and free from all errors, the other source must also be infallible. It is impossible that the Holy Prophet would ask his followers to acquire religion from a person who is liable to commit mistakes.

It is here that the Shi'ah doctrine basically differs from that of the Sunnis in respect of gathering and expounding religion. The Sunnis say that just as revelation ceased with the passing away of the Holy Prophet, similarly the authentic expounding of religion also has come to an end. Now there is nothing except what is deduced and inferred from the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions.

Prohibition of Recording of Traditions

The Sunnis themselves have created a situation which has weakened their case. Umar disallowed the writing of traditions (Ahadith). This is a historical fact, not a story invented by any hostile Shi'ah. It is admitted by the European Orientalists also who are neither the Shi'ah

nor the Sunnis. Even the most sympathetic Orientalists say that Umar disallowed the writing of traditions because of his fear that tradition would divert the attention of the people from the Qur'an, which he wanted to be the sole source of law. This is definitely a historical fact and not an allegation of the Shi'ites. During the days of Umar nobody could venture to write a Prophetic traditions and show his writing to others. Oral transmission of traditions was of course allowed. This situation continued till the time of Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, who became Caliph in 99 A.H. and died in 101 A.H. He issued instructions that Prophetic traditions should be collected and put down in writing. Thus he changed Umar's policy. It is to be noted that immediately following Umar ibn Abdul Aziz's instructions those who were so far transmitting Prophetic traditions orally, undertook the work of writing them, but in the meanwhile a part of them had already been lost.

We know that the rules of Islamic law mentioned in the Qur'an are very brief. The Qur'an mostly mentions general rules only. For example, the Qur'an lays great stress on prayers. But still all that it says about them does not go beyond saying: **"Establish prayers, prostrate and bow down."** Even it has not been explained how prayers are to be offered. Similarly there are so many rites connected with pilgrimage. The Holy Prophet personally observed them. Had not the Prophetic traditions assumed the present practical form, the Muslims could not know anything about them. But the question is what opportunities the Holy Prophet had to enunciate all the Islamic injunctions. During his 13 years' stay in Makkah because of stern opposition and very tight situation there, the number of those who were converted to Islam could not probably exceed 400. People used to meet the Holy Prophet only secretly. Some 70 families which constituted half or even more than half of the total population of the Muslims, had to migrate to Ethiopia.

From this point of view Medina was a better place, but there the Holy Prophet had so many other commitments. Even if he worked like a whole-time teacher, during all these 23 years he did not have enough time at his disposal to impart all the teachings of Islam, especially in view of the fact that Islam is a complete code of human life particularly in our present age.

Use of Analogy

As a result of what they hold in this connection, the Sunnis had to face many practical difficulties in regard to the rules of Islamic law. They came across questions about which nothing was mentioned in the Qur'an. They checked the collections of traditions which they had, but there also they did not find the answer. What to do then? To solve the problem they resorted to analogy which means to extend on the basis of some existing similarity the rule of a text to a case not provided for in the Quran and the Sunnah. For example we say that the law says so in that case. As this case is some what similar to that, the same rule should apply to this case also. Possibly, in that case the Holy Prophet gave that particular order for such and such reason and as that reason exists in this case also, the same order should apply to it also.

As may be seen, the analogical deduction is based on possibilities only. The cases where Prophetic traditions were not available, were too many. The world of Islam greatly extended during the Abbasid period. Many countries were conquered. Consequently new problems arose everyday, the solution of which was not found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The result was that analogical deduction became a regular practice. The Sunnis were divided into two groups. The first group which included Ahmad ibn Hambal and

Malik ibn Anas, looked at analogical deduction with suspicion. It is said that Malik ibn Anas resorted to this process only in two cases. The other group which included Abu Hanifah made use of analogy on a too wide scale. Abu Hanifah used to say that the sayings attributed to the Holy Prophet were not reliable. He declared that he found only fifteen Prophetic traditions trustworthy. In all other cases he resorted to analogical

deduction. Shafi'i had a midway position. In some cases he relied on Prophetic traditions and in others he applied analogy, with the result that he produced a sort of hotchpotch code of law. It is said that Abu Hanifah made so much use of analogy because he was of Irani origin and the Iranians by nature tend to take much interest in mental exercises, and because he lived in Iraq which was far away from Medina, the centre of the traditionalists. Anyhow, he indulged too much in analogy.

A Sunni writer says that one day Abu Hanifah went to a barber. His beard had a mixture of black and grey hair but the number of the grey hair was not very large. He asked the barber to pull out the grey hair. The barber said: "If grey hair is pulled out, it tends to grow more copiously." Abu Hanifah said: "Then pull out the black hair, for my analogy says that in case grey hair grows copiously if it is pulled out, the same thing should happen in the case of black hair also." But the fact is that if there is any such rule, it applies to grey hair only, not to black hair. Anyhow, Abu Hanifah made similar deductions in the case of jurisprudence also.

Analogy From the Shi'ah Point of View

When we refer to the Shi'ah traditions we find that according to them the need of analogy is felt only because of the wrong notion that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are not enough to provide all the necessary rules of law. The fact is that this notion is totally wrong. We have received such a quantity of Prophetic traditions either directly or through the chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet, that if we refer to the principles laid down therein, we need not resort to analogical deduction at all. That is the spirit of Imamat from religious point of view.

Islam is not merely a creed or a doctrine. It cannot be said that after its ideology has been enunciated by its founder it only requires a government to implement that ideology. It is a complete code and that position of it must be kept in mind.

No Question of Election in the Presence of an Infallible Imam

From the viewpoint of leadership and rulership the position is that Imam Ali the Holy Prophet's successor who is as infallible as the Prophet himself and who has been designated by him to be his successor, cannot be placed at par with other people. His position is exceptional like that of the Prophet himself. Therefore in his case there is no room for any election, consultation or any other such thing. In the case of the Prophet nobody ever said that he was only the Messenger of Allah and the people were at liberty to choose him or anybody else to be their ruler. Everybody knew that as he was superhuman and had contact with the Divine world, in his presence there could be no question of any election or selection. After the Holy Prophet also there was no room for any such thing, for he had designated twelve successors to strengthen Islam during the next two or three centuries and to expound it in a way free from every error. In the presence of such persons capable of explaining all the injunctions of Islam, there could be no question of any election etc. Is it reasonable to choose someone else in the presence of a person absolutely infallible and extremely competent and learned in every sense of the word?

Furthermore, when Imam Ali had been appointed an Imam in the sense mentioned by us, worldly leadership was also naturally due to him. In fact the Holy Prophet designated Imam Ali to this assignment because Imam Ali was an Imam and infallible. Anyhow, the case is different during the occultation of the present Imam, for there exists no infallible Imam free to exercise his worldly authority. Similarly the case would have been different if the events of the early period of Islam had not taken place and. Imam Ali had become Caliph immediately after the Holy Prophet and had been succeeded by Imam Hasan, then by Imam Husayn and so on till the times of the last Imam. In this case there would have been no reason for occultation. After the demise of the last infallible Imam the question of rulership would have assumed a different shape. Then it could be asked how this question is to be solved. Is it or is it not necessary that a jurist fulfilling all the prerequisite conditions should be the ruler? Can people elect their ruler?

As such from the very beginning we should not regard the question of Imamat as a simple question of worldly government. It would be wrong to ask at this stage whether Islam wants a government based on nomination or a government based on election, and then to ask why the Shi'ah advocate a particular form of government. The question is not so simple. It must be admitted that in the presence of an infallible Imam, nobody else can have a claim to the rulership in the same way as in the presence of the Holy Prophet nobody else could be the ruler. The Holy Prophet had appointed Imam Ali the Imam and as such it was his privilege to be the ruler also. Besides, on several occasion the Holy Prophet made it clear that Imam Ali was to succeed him as the ruler of the Muslims. Anyhow, it is to be remembered that he made this nomination on the basis that Imam Ali was the Imam after him.

Question of Spiritual Wilayat:

Earlier I mentioned a point in which I believe persona and consider it to be a basic doctrine, though it might not be a cardinal principle of Shi'ism. The question is what the special characteristics of the Holy Prophet's position were? What was revealed to him, did it only confine to Divine injunctions; and the fundamental principles and collateral teachings of Islam? Was his knowledge confined to the realities of Islam, or was any other information also communicated to him by Allah? Is his excellence in regard to piety confined to his being infallible and immune from all errors? Almost the same questions arise in respect of the Imams also. Though they received no revelation from Allah, yet they received thorough knowledge of Islam, through the Holy Prophet and their knowledge was as free from the possibility of any error as that of the Holy Prophet himself. As regards piety, the Imams are also infallible.

Now the question is whether a Prophet or an Imam has besides these features some other. special features or qualities also reposed in his person. Besides religious knowledge what are the other branches of knowledge with which he is endowed? Is it true that the reports about the deeds performed by his Ummah (followers) are presented to the Holy Prophet, and similar reports are also presented to each Imam during his lifetime. Now the present Imam knows, hears and sees everything that happens in the world. He watches the deeds not of the Shi'ites only but of all people. In this respect there is no difference between a living and a dead Imam. As stated earlier, when you visit the grave of Imam Riza, and greet him, this action takes place as if you are calling on a person living in this world. When you greet the Imam, he hears you and looks at you. That is a manifestation of spiritual Wilayat.

We said earlier that the question of Wilayat is the point where mysticism and Shi'ism meet each other. Their ideas in this respect are very close. The mystics say that in every age there must exist a perfect man whom they call the qutb. The Shi'ah hold that in every age there must be an Imam and religious authority, who is a perfect man. As this question is not a matter of dispute between the Shi'ah and the Sunnis, we do not propose to dwell on it further at this stage. The disputed points are two, namely Imamat in the sense of expounding religion and Imamat in the sense of worldly leadership of the Muslims.

Importance of the Tradition of Thaqalayn

In regard to the question of Imamat, you should not ignore the importance of this tradition. If by chance you have to face a Sunni scholar or even a non-scholar, you should ask him whether the Holy Prophet did or did not utter such a sentence. If he says that he did not, you can put before him so many books of the Sunnis themselves. In fact the Sunni scholars cannot, and generally do not, deny the existence and veracity of such a tradition[29].

Then say to him: "The Holy Prophet has designated the Qur'an as the authority No. 1 and his 'descendants' as the authority No. 2. Now tell us who these descendants are."

It may be noted that the Sunnis make no difference between the Holy Prophet's descendants and others. They narrate Prophetic traditions more often on the authority of other companions than on the authority of Imam Ali. Even when they quote Imam Ali, they quote him as a transmitter of a Prophet's tradition, not as an authority.

The Tradition of Ghadir

As we have said, he who is the authority for a religion must also be the leader of that religion. Further, as far as leadership is concerned, the Holy Prophet expressly designated Imam Ali to that. The tradition of Ghadir is an instance of such a declaration. The Ghadir declaration was made by the Holy Prophet on the occasion of the farewell pilgrimage at a place called Ghadir al-Khum. This pilgrimage was the last Hajj performed by the Holy Prophet. In all probability he did not perform more than one Hajj after the conquest of Makkah, but he performed one 'Umrah before his farewell Pilgrimage. On the occasion of the farewell Pilgrimage he issued a general invitation to all the Muslims to attend that Hajj. When all of them assembled, he delivered sermons on different occasions in the Masjidul Haram, at Arafat, at Mina, outside Mina and at Ghadir al-Khum. After mentioning some other points at Ghadir al-Khum he finally mentioned a point which he greatly emphasized. In our opinion he made it the last point because of this verse which he recited there: **"0 Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message."** (Surah al Ma'idah, 5:67)

The Holy Prophet mentioned many principles of Islam and collateral matters in his sermons which he delivered at Arafat, Mina and Masjidul Haram. On all these occasions he dealt with important matters. But at Ghadir al-Khum he made an announcement about which he said that if he did not make it, all that he had said would become void. Then he said: "Am I not closer to you than your own selves?" He was referring to a Qur'anic verse which says: **"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves."** (Surah al Ahzab, 33:6)

He continued to say "Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have?" All those who were present said: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, you have." Then the Holy Prophet announced: "This Ali is the master (Maula) of him, whose master I am."

A comprehensive summary of the question of Ghadir was published a few years back at Mashhad in the form of a book by the Society for Publication of Islamic Truths. I have not yet read this book, but those friends of mine who have read it, say that it is a very good book, at least worth reading.

It will require too much space if we attempt to study all the sources of the tradition of Ghadir which we claim to be a mutawatir tradition or the tradition of Thaqalayn, the sources of which Mir Hamid Husayn, the author of the 'Abaqatul Anwar has traced in 400 pages of large size. While dealing with the crux of the problem of Imamat, we would like to make only a brief

mention of the authorities on which the Shi'ah base their claim in this regard, although the question might need rather a more elaborate discussion.

[29] Some preachers have made a gross misuse of this tradition, for they invariably use it as a prelude to narrating the misfortunes of the Prophet's chosen descendants. One may think that when the Holy Prophet said that he was leaving two things behind him: the Qur'an and his descendants, what he meant was only that those two things were to be held in high respect and were not to be insulted at all. In fact what the Holy Prophet meant was that he was living behind two authorities to which all religious and social questions were to be referred. In the concluding part of this tradition the Holy Prophet has said: "So long as you adhere to them, you will not go astray." So the question is that of adherence. The Holy Prophet has declared his descendants equal with the Quran. He himself has said that the Qur'an was the major 'thaqal' and his descendants the minor 'thaqal'.

Scholastic Study of Imamat

With a view to make clear the basis of the arguments which the Shi'ah scholars advance in support of their conception of Imamat and to show what others say in this respect, we deem it fit to reproduce with some explanatory remarks a passage written by Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi. This passage is very precise and the Shi'ah and the Sunni scholars alike have been commenting on it since it was written.

You must have heard the name of a book, Tajrid, written by Khwaja Nasiruddin. A part of this book deals with logic and is called the logic of Tajrid. Another part of it deals with scholastic theology and discusses such questions as Monotheism, Prophethood, Imamat, the Hereafter etc. The tone of that section which discusses Monotheism is rather philosophical for in this section Khwaja Nasiruddin has followed the style of the philosophers. A commentary on both the parts of this book has been written by Allama Hilli, whose name also must be familiar to you. He was not only one of the greatest Shi'ah jurists but also one of the greatest jurists of Islam. In logic, scholastic theology, philosophy, mathematics etc, he was a pupil of Khwaja Nasiruddin. He learned jurisprudence from Muhaqqiq Hilli, the author of Sharaya, who was also one of the most distinguished Shi'ah jurists. Allama Hilli and Khwaja Nasiruddin are counted among the most talented scholars. Khwaja Nasiruddin is considered to be one of the world class mathematicians also. Recently newspapers have announced that some parts of the moon have been named after certain Iranian mathematicians, such as Umar Khayyam, Ibn Sina and Khwaja Nasiruddin, who centuries ago advanced some very sound theories about the moon. There is no doubt that Allama Hilli is a genius in his own field, that is jurisprudence. He is the author of many books, including one in two volumes named Tazkiratul Fuqaha. When one studies this book, one marvels at the mastery of its author.

Muhammad Qazwini says that when he was in Tehran he used to attend the lectures of Mirza Ashtiyani. Later when he went to Europe, and had a chance to meet several European scholars who were specialists in their subjects, he felt that Mirza Ashtiyani was a specialist in the real sense of the word.

The Tazkiratul Fuqaha is a book that deals not only with Shi'ah jurisprudence, but in regard to every rule of law it also mentions the opinion of the Sunni schools founded by the four Sunni Imams, namely Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Malik and Ahmad bin Hambal, as well as the verdicts of the most prominent jurists preceding the formation of these four Sunni schools. Dealing with every question, it says that Abu Hanifah says so, Shafi'i says so and we the Shi'ites hold

such and such opinion. Sometimes he refutes an opinion. Sometimes, for example, he says that Shafi'i first said so and then changed his opinion and said so.

Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Qummi used to say that when it was decided to publish the Tazkirah, an expert of every Sunni school was called. These experts were astonished to find that Allama Hilli knew more than what they themselves knew about the teachings of their schools. Such an extraordinary man Allama Hilli was!

He compiled a commentary on the Tajrid. That part of it which deals with logic is known as al Jawharun Nazid. It is one of the best books on logic. The scholastic part of the book is named Kashful Murad and is now known by the name of Sharhut Tajrid. Both the parts of Allama Hilli's commentary on the Tajrid are quite brief in expression. That is why they have again been commented upon subsequently and explanatory notes written on them. Perhaps no book in the Muslim world ever attracted so much attention of the scholars as the Tajrid. This book has been refuted by some and supported by others. No other book has been furnished with so many commentaries and annotations as this book. The reason is that when Khwaja Nasiruddin wants to describe a question from the Shi'ah point of view, he touches it only briefly. In most cases he hurriedly refers to it and then passes away. In the concluding part of the book he has described the question of Imamat in a manner that has been approved by all Shi'ah scholars, and hence from his description of the question it is easy to understand how the Shi'ah scholars think about this subject.

The book which I have at my disposal at present is Mulla Ali Qushchi's commentary on the Tajrid. Mulla Ali Qushchi is an eminent Sunni scholar. Naturally he puts forward the Sunni point of view and in most cases refutes that of Khwaja Nasiruddin. Thus in this book the Sunni view has been reflected side by side with the view of Khwaja which of course is the Shi'ah view.

Definition of Imamat

The first thing to be mentioned about Imamat is its definition, about which there is no difference of opinion. It is said that Imamat is the general charge of the religious as well as the secular affairs.

Khwaja Nasiruddin uses a scholastic expression and says that the Imam is a Divine favour (Lutf). What he means is that like Prophethood the question of Imamat is also beyond human control. Hence an Imam cannot be selected by a human decision. Like a Prophet he is to be appointed by Divine ordinance. The only difference is that the Prophet has a direct contact with Allah, whereas an Imam is appointed by the Prophet on receiving Divine instructions.

Rational Argument of the Shi'ah

In this connection Khwaja Nasiruddin does not put forward more than one sentence. Anyhow the basis of the explanation given by the Shi'ah scholars is the same as mentioned by us earlier. They first advance a historical argument and say if Imam Ali's Imamat is proved, that of the other Imams' can be based on the authority of a declaration made by the preceding Imam. The Shi'ah scholars say that they know that Islam is the final religion and that it would not be followed by any other religion.

It is the most comprehensive religion and a complete code of human life. Then they put a question and ask whether the account of the Holy Prophet's life shows that he got enough opportunity to impart all the teachings of Islam to the people in general. When we study Islamic history we find that during the 23 years of his Prophethood he did not get such an opportunity. Although he did not miss any chance which he could avail of and taught many things to the people, yet in view of his special circumstances and his preoccupations in Makkah and Medina, it is certain that a period of 23 years was not enough for him to pronounce all the laws of Islam to all the people. At the same time it was also not possible for him to give in complete information about such a perfect religion. Therefore there must be one or more persons among the companions of the Holy Prophet who might have obtained complete knowledge of Islam from him and be in a position to explain the teachings of Islam after his demise exactly in the same manner as he himself would do, with the only difference that he received Divine revelation direct, whereas they were to acquire this knowledge through him.

The Shi'ah scholars say that the Sunnis do not acknowledge the existence of any person to whom all questions regarding Islam could be referred, which means that they regarded Islam as imperfect. That is the reason why they had to resort to the theory of analogy, which they have put forward because they say that in the case of the questions which have not been provided for in the Sunnah, they have no alternative but to compare one question with another and to depend on hypothetical similarities for the purpose of deducing rules of law. The Shi'ah naturally do not share such a view. Imam Ali in Nahjul Balagha has denounced such a view and so have all other Imams.

Imam Ali says: "Has Allah revealed an incomplete religion?" (Sermon 18). Does it need private judgement to complete? All the Imams have emphatically said that there is no question of Islam being imperfect and incomplete, and therefore no rule of law can be based on a personal opinion, a private judgement or conjecture.

There is a chapter in al-Kafi which is entitled: "There is nothing Permitted or Forbidden that is not provided in the Qur'an or the Sunnah". At least the general principles covering every rule of law, have been provided. All that is to be done is to apply these principles to the particular cases. That is what is meant by ijtihad from the Shi'ah point of view. In other words, there is an adequate number of general laws in Islam, and the mujtahid (jurist) has only to provide details in their light. In contrast the theory of analogy implies that the number of the general laws is inadequate and therefore rules of law must be deduced on a hypothetical

basis.

The Shi'ah scholars say that both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis admit that during the 23 years of his Prophethood the Holy Prophet could not make known to the people all the rules of Islam even in a general manner. The Sunnis say that the Holy Prophet left the matter as it was and departed this life. But the Shi'ah hold that it was not so. In order to complete his mission he selected certain persons who were inviolable and made known all the truths of Islam to the first one of them, namely Imam Ali. All these persons were fully equipped and competent to answer any question put to them. Imam Ali often said that he would answer any question put to him regarding Islam.

Imam Means An Expert in Religious Matters

Let us now explain this point in modern language. The Shi'ah scholars say that those who deny the existence of Imams with all their characteristics, in reality belittle Islam. An expert invariably accompanies a technical equipment when it is sent somewhere. When a country like America or the Soviet Union dispatches a technical equipment like a phantom or a combat aircraft to a country the people of which are not conversant with that equipment, it always sends some experts also along with it. Of course in the case of such simple arms as the textiles experts are not required. Now what do you think about Islam which has come from Allah? Do you consider it to be a simple thing for which no experts are required or regard it as a complex equipment which when issued, is always accompanied by technical experts who train people at the receiving end till they become conversant with it.

An Imam means an expert in religious affairs - a real expert who does not make a mistake and does not fall into any error. The Holy Prophet brought Islam to the people. It was necessary that at least for some time Divine experts should be present among the people to acquaint them with it. The Holy Prophet appointed a competent person to undertake this responsibility. The Shi'ah scholars call this appointment a Divine favour, for it was beneficial for humanity. As humanity must proceed towards Allah, His benevolence requires that He should show His favour to it. Just as Prophethood is a Divine favour, similarly Imamat also is a Divine favour. This may be called a rational proof of Imamat, a cardinal principle of the Shi'ah creed.

Infallibility

Here the question of infallibility arises. The Shi'ah believe that an Imam is the custodian and protector of Islamic law. It is through him only that people can know Islam.[30] The Shi'ah believe that an Imam is as infallible as the Holy Prophet, whose infallibility is beyond all doubts. If we know for certain that the Holy Prophet has made a particular statement, we can never doubt its veracity. We can never say that the Holy Prophet has made a mistake. It is unimaginable that one sent by Allah for the guidance of the people needing guidance would ever make a mistake or commit a sin. A Prophet cannot disobey Allah knowingly and

intentionally. For example, if Allah wants a Prophet to convey a certain message to the people, the Prophet cannot change it on the plea that it does not suit his personal interest. To do so would be against the very nature of Prophethood. If it is admitted that Imamat is something supplementary to Prophethood for the purpose of expounding religion, then it becomes certain that the existence of an Imam is a must, and that an Imam is infallible for the same reason for which a Prophet is infallible. If somebody says that the infallibility of an Imam is not so essential, because if an Imam makes a mistake, it is possible that some other person brings the mistakes to his notice, we would say that in that case that other person would again require somebody else to keep a watch on him, and so on. At the final end we would certainly need a protector of Islamic law who may be infallible. Further, should an Imam do something wrong, it would be the duty of others to guide him aright, while the people's duty is to follow him, not to guide him. These two things are not consistent with each other.

Divine Designation

The question of infallibility leads us to the question of Divine designation. The Shi'ah scholars say that Imamat is a favour of Allah, and as such it must exist. As this favour entails infallibility, an Imam must necessarily be infallible and for this very reason should be Divinely designated, for it is beyond the power of the people to determine who is infallible. As the people cannot choose a Prophet, they cannot choose an Imam

also. As a Prophet is appointed by Allah, similarly an Imam is also appointed by Him. The only difference is that a Prophet is recognized by means of the signs which he shows and the miracles which he works, whereas an Imam is introduced by the Prophet. That is what we meant by designation. An Imam is to be designated by the Prophet and not appointed by the choice of the people. Thus the Shi'ah scholars have advanced from the question of infallibility to that of designation. Now the fourth step is the Imamat of Ali.

Khwaja Nasiruddin says that infallibility and designation are the two characteristics which are applicable to Imam Ali only. There is no difference of opinion about the fact that the Holy Prophet did not designate any other person. It is not that we say that the Holy Prophet designated Imam Ali and others say that he designated someone else. In fact the question is whether he did or did not designate anybody. If he did, the designated person can be none but Imam Ali. All that we say is that the Holy Prophet must have designated someone to be an Imam after him, and if so, he cannot have designated anyone else, for no counter claim exists. The Sunnis deny the very designation. Even the caliphs did not claim to have been designated by the Holy Prophet. Their followers also make no such claim. Therefore this is not the point at issue.

The same is true of infallibility. Neither the caliphs claimed to be infallible, nor do their followers say that they were infallible. In contrast, the caliphs expressly confessed that they

made mistakes. As we have already pointed out, according to the Sunni point of view the question of Imamat is exclusively tantamount to that of the administration of government. As such according to them the question of infallibility does not arise. The Sunnis believe that although the caliphs were not infallible and made many mistakes, they were irreproachable to the humanly possible extent and were quite fit to lead prayers. The Sunnis do not claim that the caliphs held any position higher than this. They report, as affirmed by Mulla Ali Qushchi, that Abu Bakr used to say that he had a Devil which seized him occasionally. He asked the people to guide him aright if they found him going astray. Umar on many occasions, some say on 70 occasions, admitted that he would have been ruined if there had not been Ali. It is not a disputable point between the Shi'ah and the Sunnis that he said so many a time. On numerous occasions it so happened that he issued a wrong order and Imam Ali pointed out his mistake which he admitted. As such neither the caliphs ever claimed that they were infallible, nor do others claim that they were so.

If the question of Imamat is considered from this high level, that is the level of Divine favour, infallibility and Divine ordination, nobody other than Imam Ali can claim to be on this level. This is the scholastic form of the question, and in this case we begin from the top. We have said that as Prophethood is indispensable and at the same time a Divine favour, so should be Imamat also. Now let us see whether in actual practice also it is so, and whether the Holy Prophet has or has not designated Imam Ali. For this purpose let us look into the texts.

In this connection there is one more point worth mentioning. The question is why we should after all adopt a scholastic method and should begin from the top. Why should we not begin from the bottom, and discuss the position as it actually exists? The scholastic theologians begin from the top and then gradually come down to the position as it exists on the ground. But in this case the question arises what we have to do with such points as to whether Imamat is a Divine favour, and if so, an Imam should naturally be infallible and designated. These should actually amount to prescribing a duty for Allah. Therefore we should better go after what actually exists. If it is proved that the Holy Prophet has made a designation, that is enough for us. It is not necessary to prove rationally that Imamat is a Divine favour and that an Imam must be infallible and designated. Let us see what arguments the Shi'ah have in this connection. It may be noted in this connection that the Sunnis either do not accept that such texts exist or interpret them differently. In many cases they do not deny the reports totally, but allege that they are isolated reports, not continuous or mutawatir.

Prophetic Texts Relating to Imamat of Imam Ali

Once the Holy Prophet addressing his companions said: "Greet Ali and address him as "Commander of the Faithful". He said so on the occasion of Ghadir, but somehow or other this sentence is reported separately from the event of Ghadir. The Sunnis do not accept this report as continuous one but the Shi'ah scholars have proved that it is so. The Tajrid does not make any further comment on this tradition which it describes as reliable though disconnected in its chain of transmission. Mulla Ali Qushchi says that this tradition cannot be accepted as

continuous, and that it must be an isolated one, for it has been quoted only by some, not all. The books like the 'Abaqat and al-Ghadir have concentrated their efforts on proving that all the reports relating to Imam Ali's Imamat are continuous and mutawatir. In these two books, especially in al-Ghadir the transmitters of the tradition of Ghadir in every generation till the 14th century have been enumerated. It names more than 60 companions of the Holy Prophet who have reported this tradition. It is interesting to note that all these names have been collected from the Sunni books. Similarly this book mentions the transmitters of this tradition from among the successors of the companions. All these approximately belong to the first century. Then in the same way it names the transmitters of this tradition in every generation and every century. A special feature of al-Ghadir is that it has cited literary sources also in support of this tradition. While 'Abaqat and other books have only mentioned the names of those persons who transmitted it in each age and century. The poets in every age reflect the main ideas current among the people during that age. Had it been true that the event of Ghadir was invented in the fourth century, it would not have been mentioned in the verses composed by the poets of the first, the second and the third centuries. In every century we find that the question of Ghadir is a part of the literature of that century. Then how can we deny this tradition from historical point of view? We often go after men of letters to ascertain whether a subject existed over history. If it is found that many men of letters have referred to it in each century, it becomes certain that the idea has existed during their times. The author of the 'Abaqat has devoted a whole book to one single tradition and has critically examined all its transmitters. Seeing what a gorgeous bouquet he has arranged, one is filled with wonder.

There is another tradition which the Holy Prophet is reported to have pronounced addressing Imam Ali. He is reported to have said: "You will be the Caliph after me."

Besides these two there are several other such traditions too.

Sirah Ibn Hisham is a book written in the second century. Ibn Hisham himself probably belonged to the third century, but this book was originally written by Ibn Ishaq, who lived in the second century. It was later summarized by Ibn Hisham in whose authorship it has come down to us. This book which is considered to be reliable by the Sunnis, recounts two events which have not been mentioned by the Tajrid. Anyhow, the events are relevant and as such we reproduce them here.

The Event of the Day of Warning

One of these events relates to the Day of warning, a name taken from the Qur'anic verse revealed in the early days of Islam: **"Warn your close relatives"** (Surah ash-Shu'ara 26:214).

Till then the Holy Prophet had not begun to propagate Islam openly. As we know, at that time Imam Ali was still a boy, and lived in the Holy Prophet's house. That is itself an event. The Holy Prophet asked Imam Ali to arrange some food and invite the descendants of Hashim and

Abdul Muttalib to it. Imam Ali prepared a meal of meat and arranged some milk as a dessert. After the guests had taken food, the Holy Prophet said: "I am a Prophet of Allah, raised by Him as such. If you accept what I say, you will be happy in this world and the Hereafter." As soon as the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abu Lahab heard these words, he was enraged, and said: "Have you invited us to tell us all this nonsense?" Abu Lahab raised so much hue and cry that the meeting ended in a fiasco.

The Holy Prophet asked Imam Ali to arrange another meeting. Imam Ali himself says that the number of the persons who attended the second meeting was more or less forty. The Prophet said to the audience: "Whosoever of you accepts my call first, he will be my legatee, vizir and successor." He made this announcement several times, but nobody responded. At last Imam Ali rose from his place and accepted the offer. The Holy Prophet said: "You will be my legatee, vizir and caliph after me."

Meeting of the Head of a Tribe With the Holy Prophet

This is another event found in the Sirah Ibn Hisham. It is still more significant. The Holy Prophet was still in Makkah. The Quraysh were not allowing him to propagate Islam. The situation was very tense. Anyhow, during the sacred months[31] the Quraysh stopped harassing the Holy Prophet or at least did not harass him to the extent of inflicting any bodily injury, although even during these months they did not allow him to pursue any activity connected with the propagation of Islam. Anyhow the Holy Prophet always took advantage of this temporary truce. He called upon various tribes who assembled at the 'Ukaz fair and at Arafat, (The pre-Islamic Arabs also performed Hajj, although they had their own style of it.) and invited them to Islam. While the Holy Prophet went round the tribes, Abu Lahab chased him, and contradicted and belied him. The head of a tribe was very shrewd. He talked with the Holy Prophet for a little while and they said to his people: "Had this man been of my tribe, I would have devoured the Arabs with his help." What he meant was that the Holy Prophet was so multi-talented that with his help all the Arabs could be subdued. Then that man turned to the Holy Prophet and said: "I and my people are ready to have faith in you provided you give us your word to appoint me or one of my people to be your successor." The Holy Prophet said: "It is not up to me to say who would succeed me. It is with Allah." This is an event mentioned in the books of the Sunnis.

The Tradition of Ghadir and Its Continuity

Another argument of the Shi'ah is the tradition of Ghadir. Khwaja Nasiruddin says that the Tradition of Ghadir is mutawatir. Mutawatir is a technical term. A tradition may either be mutawatir (continuous) or khabar wahid (isolated). An isolated tradition does not mean that it has been reported only by one person. It is a tradition which has not been reported in a convincing way. It is immaterial whether it has been reported by one person or by ten. For example, somebody says that he has heard such and such report from the radio. You think that

he is right, but you still want to see what others say. If the report is confirmed by someone else, you are a little more convinced. When you see that many others say the same thing, you become sure that there is no chance that all of them may be telling a lie. The number of the reporters of a continuous tradition must be so large that there should be no possibility of their conspiring. In the above example it is possible that ten persons conspire to say that they have heard the particular report from the radio. Even 200 persons may combine. But there are cases in which there is no such possibility. For example, you go to South Africa and find a person saying that the radio has broadcast such and such report. Then you go to East Africa and again find some persons reporting the same thing. Then you go to West Africa and the same story is repeated. In this case you cannot say that all these persons have conspired to tell a lie. This is called tawatur or continuity. The Shi'ah claim that the tradition (hadith) of Ghadir has been reported by so many people that any conspiracy is out of question. For example in the case of the tradition of Ghadir we cannot say that 40 companions of the Holy Prophet had conspired to tell a lie, especially when we see that many of them were hostile to Imam Ali, or at least were not friendly with him. Had these reporters been of the type of Salman, Abuzar and Miqdad, who dearly loved and followed Imam Ali, it would have been possible to suspect that because of their excessive attachment to Imam Ali they combined to invent a story. The people like Qushchi allege that this tradition is an isolated report, but the Shi'ah say emphatically that it is continuous. According to this tradition, the Holy Prophet addressing the audience, said: "Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have?"[32] All said: "Yes, you have." Then he said: **"This Ali is the master of him, whose master I am".** The Holy Prophet wanted to affirm that Ali was as superior to others as he himself was.

There is another tradition, which is also continuous according to Khwaja Nasiruddin, but Mulla Ali Qushchi says that it is isolated, although even he does not deny its substance. Regarding this tradition also scholars like Mir Hamid Husayn, the author of the 'Abaqat and Allama Amini, the author of al-Ghadir have paid much attention. Mir Hamid Husayn has devoted one full book to it. This tradition is known as the tradition of Manzilat. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said to Imam Ali: "In relation to me you occupy the same position as Harun occupied in relation to Musa with the exception that there will be on prophet after me." The Holy Prophet said that when he was proceeding for the Tabuk operation, which was only a campaign, not a battle. It took place after the Battle of Mu'tah, which was the last battle fought by the Arabs against the Romans during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. This battle took place to the east of Medina. Istambul (Constantinople) was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Syria was also under the Romans. Brisk preparations were going on there to launch an attack against Medina. The Holy Prophet deemed it advisable to take troops up to the border of the Romans and he successfully accomplished that mission.[33]

The Holy Prophet, as the politicians put it, wanted to make a show of his power. The Muslims went up to the Roman border and then came back. In this expedition the Holy Prophet did not take Imam Ali with him. He left Ali as his successor in Medina. The Shi'ah scholars say that this action of the Holy Prophet shows that he knew that fighting was not going to take place. Naturally Imam Ali did not like the idea of being left behind. As he felt dejected, he said to

the Holy Prophet: "Would you not take me with you? Do you leave me here with the women and the children?" The Holy Prophet said: "Do you not like to occupy the same position in relation to me as Harun occupied in relation to Musa, except that there would be no prophet after me?" The Holy Prophet meant to say that what ever relationship Harun bore to Musa, Imam Ali bore to him with the exception of Prophethood. Now let us refer to the Qur'an to find out what relationship existed between Harun and Musa. We find that the Quran reports that in the beginning of his mission Musa asked Allah:

"My Lord! Relieve my mind and ease my task for me; and elaborate my tongue, so that they may understand my saying. Appoint for me a Vazir from my folk, Harun, my brother. Strengthen my back with him. And let him share my task, so that we glorify you much, and much remember you." (Surah TaHa, 20:34)

The word Vazir is derived from the root, Vizr which means a burden or a responsibility. A Vazir is the person who relieves the burden of his master and shares his responsibility. Later this word, came into use in the sense of the minister of a king.

Hence, Prophet Musa asked Allah to appoint a person to help him and share his task. For this purpose he suggested the name of Harun.

At another place in the Qur'an we see that Prophet Musa says to Harun: **"Harun, take my place among my people."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:142)

Thus we find that according to the Qur'an Harun was Musa's Vazir, his chief supporter, his partner in his task and his successor among his people. That was the relationship between Prophet Musa and Harun and the same should be the relationship between the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali. Had the Holy Prophet not said, "Except that there would be no prophet after me", We could say that the Holy Prophet had some particular likeness in mind, but when he excluded Prophethood, it became clear that this relationship existed in all other fields (of course social, not physical). It appears as if the Holy Prophet wanted to say to Imam Ali: You occupy the same position in relation to me as Harun occupied in relation to Musa in all Divinely appointed fields.

The answer which the Sunnis give to this argument is that they could accept this tradition, if it had been continuous, but it is an isolated one. But as we said earlier, the scholars like Mir Hamid Husayn have proved in their books that this tradition is continuous.

Question and Answer

Question: The impression which I have gathered from the foregoing discussion is that there exists to a certain extent a frontier between Imamat and the administration of government. You have (Ayatullah Mutahhari) said that Imamat involves certain duties and functions, and

the administration of government is only one of them. I do not know what the other duties are which do not imply administration in any way. What so far we know of Islam shows that there is no frontier between this world and the Hereafter or between this worldly and the next worldly activities. The deeds relating to the Hereafter have a bearing on this worldly life and the deeds relating to this world are meant to improve and perfect social life and to help establishing a just system of government. We see that the Quran puts forward as a model the life of those whose devotional acts were directed to improving this worldly life and establishing just administration. It attaches greatest importance to Jihad. We find that all the efforts and the life style of the Imams were directed to regaining their right of rulership and administering the government. In this respect there was no difference between those who made open struggle and those who organized their campaign secretly in their prison or their hiding places. I am not aware of any duties other than the administration of government which can justify the institution of Imamat, for it is the administration of government alone which can justify all the activities relating to Imamat.

Answer: The question of frontier has been raised by you only. I never used this word and I do not think that it is proper to use it. As I have said the Shi'ah believe that the level of Imamat is higher than that of the government, which is only one of its functions., Another function which is of a higher level is the duty of an Imam to expound and explain Islam. Furthermore, an Imam is the infallible authority on religious laws. We say that one of the functions of the Holy Prophet was the administration of government. But the right to administer government was not given to him by the people. It was a right given to him by Allah, by virtue of his being superior to all other men. In other words the Holy Prophet ruled because he was the expounder of the Divine laws and had a spiritual contact with the hidden world. I never wanted to say that there was a frontier between this world and the Hereafter, nor did I mean to set apart the functions of an Imam and a ruler. I did not say that an Imam looks after those affairs of the people which relate to the Hereafter and a ruler looks after those affairs of the people which relate to this world. If I had said so, your criticism would have been justified. The Shi'ah have a theory. If it is proved, the question of rulership, is automatically settled.

We believe that Imamat is next to Prophethood. As in the presence of a Prophet, the question of the rulership of anybody else does not arise, similarly in the presence of an Imam also this question does not arise. The question of the form of government in the modern sense arises only when we suppose that no Imam exists or when the Imam is in occultation as the position is during our times. Otherwise in the presence of an Imam of that level in which the Shi'ah believe, the position is quite clear.

Question: Which of the two reports according to Sunnis is isolated, the report relating to the Ghadir al-Khum or the report which you have quoted and according to which the Holy Prophet has said: "Greet Ali; he is your Amir"?

Answer: Perhaps even the Sunnis cannot deny the continuity of that part of the tradition of Ghadir which says: "Ali is the master of him whose master I am", although Mulla Ali

Qushchi says that even this part is an isolated report.

Anyhow it has been reported by so many traditionalists that it is not possible to deny it.[34] A very large number of persons have even reported the first part of this tradition, which says: "Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have." The Shi'ah believe this part of the tradition also to be continuous. But as far as the other tradition: "Greet Ali and address him as the Commander of the Faithful" , is concerned, the Sunnis do not at all admit that it is a continuous report. Perhaps we also cannot prove that it is continuous. Anyhow that makes no difference. From our point of view the continuity of the following tradition, which is of basic importance, is obvious: The Holy Prophet said: 'Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have? The people said: "Yes, you have." Then the Holy Prophet said: "This Ali is the master of him, whose master I am. My God! be friendly to him who is friendly to Ali and be hostile to him who is hostile to Ali."

Furthermore, the Sunni scholars are not unanimous as to whether this tradition is continuous or isolated. Some say it is isolated and others admit that it is continuous, but say that it does not mean what the Shi'ah claim. The Holy Prophet has only said: "Whoever is my friend, let him be Ali's friend also." We say that it does not make sense that the Holy Prophet assembled people at Ghadir al-Khum only to ask them to make friends with Imam Ali, especially in view of the fact that he also added: "Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have." It also may be noted that the word Mawla is not used in the sense of friend.

Question: Was the verse: **"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, and have chosen Islam for you as religion"** revealed after the event of Ghadir al-Khum?

Answer: No, it was revealed at Ghadir al-Khum.

[30] The Shi'ah attach great importance to the religious aspect of Imamat. As we said earlier in our times Imamat who mostly considered to be tantamount to the administration of government, but that was a wrong notion. Imamat is mostly a religious question and the administration of government is only a function which it involves. In a sense Imamat and administration of government are two terms which in certain respects overlap each other. But basically Imamat is one question and administration of government, although a part of the functions which an Imam should discharge, a different question. It is funny that during the period of occultation we talk about the administration of government, but keep quiet about the real significance of Imamat, which must not be considered to be equivalent to the administration of government. According to the terminology of the Shi'ah scholars an Imam is in charge of religious as well as secular affairs. Being in charge of religious affairs, he automatically holds the charge of worldly affairs also, just like the Holy Prophet, who being the religious head, was the head of the government too. If we suppose hypothetically that no Imam existed at any time or if we know that the Imam is in occultation, in both these cases no

religious head would be present. Therefore in these cases the question would of course arise how should be the head of the government.

[31] The months of Zil Qa'dah, Zil Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab are the sacred months, during which fighting was kept suspended and vengeance was not sought. Routes were safe during these months and coming and going of persons and goods normal. An annual fair was also held at a Place near Makkah named 'Ukaz.

[32] The Holy Prophet referred to the following verse, **"The Prophet has more authority over the believers than they themselves have."** (Surah al Ahzab 33:6) Being a Prophet of Allah, the Holy Prophet had authority over the life, property and everything of the people. He had more authority over the people than the people themselves had. Of course he never exercised this authority for his own selfish ends. Allah appointed him the representative of the whole Muslim society and as such he had authority over the life and property of the Muslims on behalf of Muslim society as a whole.

[33] Last year we had a chance to go to Khayber. Till then we had no idea how far Khayber and Tabuk were from Medina by the direct route via Shusa. The whole distance was found to be exactly 600 kilometers. By the ancient routes the distance might have been greater. The distance between Medina and Khayber is 360 kilometers. We were really astonished by the courage and resolution of the Muslims who traversed this long distance with the poor means available to them at that time.

[34] The reason why it has been reported by a very large number of transmitters is that at that time the sayings of the Holy Prophet were only remembered and not written. Naturally the traditions containing Imam Ali's name could be remembered by more people than any other traditions.

Imamat and the Verse regarding Despair of Unbelievers.

We have already discussed that the doctrine of Shi'ah regarding the question of Imamat is basically different from that of the Sunnis. Hence it is not correct to say that both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis believe in Imamat alike, and differ in regard to its conditions only. In fact the Imamat in which we believe is absolutely different from the Imamat in which the Sunnis believe. It is equally incorrect to put the question whether the Imam is to be designated by the Holy Prophet or elected by the people, for the Imam of the Shi'ah concept appointed by a Prophetic ordinance, is quite different from the Imam of the Sunni concept, who is appointed by consultation and election.

We have already discussed the various stages and the conditions of Imamat, and pointed out that the Shi'ah begin the consideration of this question from the top and then come down to the facts as they exist to make sure that their theory is not merely hypothetical. They ascertain if the Qur'an has said something in this respect and whether the Holy Prophet has actually designated someone to this high office.

First we intended to discuss the relevant points in the order in which they have been mentioned by Khwaja Nasiruddin, but as the Eid al-Ghadir (festival of Ghadir) is going to be celebrated shortly, we deem it better to explain first the verses connected with that occasion.

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Today, the unbelievers have lost hope of ever harming your religion; so fear them not and have fear of Me! This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, and have chosen Islam as your religion."*** (Surah al Ma'ida 5:3)

The two parts of this verse begin with "*this day*". Both these parts are naturally interlinked with each other. In this verse this day may mean 'to-day' or may refer to some other day mentioned earlier. When we say that such and such person has arrived this day, that means that he has arrived today. Allah says that this day (we will explain afterwards which day) those who disbelieve are in despair of harming your religion. Having lost all hope of their success, they have stopped their hostile activities against Islam. So do not fear them. The next sentence is very astonishing. Instead, fear Me. It may be noted that the question involved is that of religion. Does Allah mean to say that 'the disbelievers can no longer do any harm to your religion. If any harm is to be done to it, it will be done by Me? We will explain later, what the verse actually means. Continuing Allah says: This day have I perfected your religion

and completed my favour to you. In this part of the verse two words, perfected and completed have been used. These two words approximately mean the same thing, but with some difference.

Difference Between Perfection and Completion

A thing, the various parts of which should appear successively is called incomplete so long as its final part does not appear. When its last part appears, we say that it has been completed. A building is still incomplete even when its pillars have gone up and it has been roofed. It. is complete only when all parts of it get built up and it is finally fit for occupation. That is not the case with perfection. A thing may be called imperfect even when all its parts are complete, but not fully developed. A foetus is completed in the womb of its mother. In other words all its parts get built up. But even when it is delivered, it is not a perfect man. That means that it is not as mature as it should be. To become fully developed and mature is different from being complete. In fact the difference between completion and perfection is the same as between quantity and quality.

The Qur'an says: ***"This day I have completed for you your religion, and then adds: perfected My favour to you and chose for you Islam as a religion."*** In other words, Islam is now what Allah wanted it to be. Evidently the intention is not that Islam is still what it was, yet Allah has changed His view about it. What is meant is that now Islam, the chosen religion of Allah, has reached the stage of completion and perfection.

That is what the verse means. Now the question is to which day the phrase 'this day' refers. Which is the day on which according to the Qur'an , the religion of the Muslims was perfected and favour of Allah completed? That day on which such an extraordinary event took place must be a very important day. To this point both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree.

It is astonishing that the preceding and the following verses give no indication as to which day is that day. The context provides no verbal indication. In the preceding verses no important event has been mentioned, to which 'this day' may be referring. Very simple rules of law regarding the meat of certain animals, carrion, blood and pork have been mentioned in the verses immediately preceding this verse. Then all of a sudden the Quran says: This day the disbelievers have lost hope of ever harming your religion; so fear them not, fear Me. This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, and have chosen Islam for you as a religion. Then the Qur'an again turns to previous theme and says: But he who is forced to eat the forbidden meat by hunger, not by will to sin, for him Allah is forgiving, Merciful. These verses have been so placed that if the intervening verse is taken out, the other verses run smoothly and the subject matter is not disturbed. The subject of meat has been repeated at two or three other places in the Qur'an, but there this intervening verse is not found.

Which Day Is Meant By This Day?

Both the Shi'ah and the Sunni commentators of the Qur'an have tried to ascertain what 'this day' signifies. There are two ways of doing this.

One way is to find out its significance from the context and the other is to refer to history and tradition in order to find out on what occasion this verse was revealed. Those who have chosen the first course are indifferent to all that which history and the Sunnah say about the background of this verse. They look only to the substance of verse, and claim that it relates to the day on which the Holy Prophet was raised. According to them 'this day' means that day, not today.

It may also be mentioned that this verse belongs to the Surah al-Maidah, which is the fifth chapter of the Qur'an beginning with the following verse: ***"Believers stand by your contracts (obligations)".*** (Surah Ma'idah, 5:1)

All commentators of the Qur'an agree that this chapter is the last one revealed at Medina. It was revealed even later than the Surah an Nasr. It is true that one or two verses placed in other surahs were revealed subsequently, but not a complete surah. Thus the Surah al-Ma'idah is the last Surah revealed to the Holy Prophet.

Various Views Regarding What is Meant by 'This Day'

(i) The Day the Holy Prophet was Raised

We have said that according to some people this day means that day, not this day. The question is what that indicates? They say that as this day has been described as the day on which Allah chose Islam as His religion for people. Naturally this day should be the day on which Islam commenced. But this argument is based on the words: I chose Islam for you as a religion. It could be valid had these words not been preceded by the sentence which says: This day I have completed for you your religion and perfected My favour to you. The day Islam was incepted is the day of the beginning of Allah's favour, not the day of its perfection. Hence 'this day' cannot be the day on which the Holy Prophet was raised to Prophethood.

(ii) The Day of the Conquest of Makkah

Another possibility is that 'this day' means the day of the conquest of Makkah. This is also a mere possibility without any evidence in support of it. It is argued that another day of great importance in the history of Islam is the day when Makkah was conquered, as on that day the following verses were revealed: ***"Surely Allah has given you a signal victory, so that Allah may forgive you of your sin, that which is past and that which is to come."*** (Surah al-Fatah, 48:1-2)

There is no doubt that 'that day' was of great importance. In the Arabian Peninsula Makkah spiritually had a unique position. Since the attack on the Ka'bah by the People of the Elephant and their defeat in an astonishing manner, all Arabs held the Ka'bah in great reverence and regard it as the most sacred place of worship. Following this event the Quraysh felt proud of themselves. They said that the Ka'bah was so sacred that a formidable army attacking it was afflicted by a celestial catastrophe and annihilated to the last man. The Quraysh believed that the event showed their importance. It had a psychological impact on other Arabs also, who began to respect and obey the Quraysh.

Since that time the Arabs had begun to believe that no body could overpower them and seize the Ka'bah. But against all their calculations and expectations the Holy Prophet conquered Makkah easily without any bloodshed. During that operation nobody received the slightest injury. Perhaps the Holy Prophet had this point in view besides the sanctity of Makkah when he took special care of ensuring that Makkah was occupied without any bloodshed. If fighting had taken place somewhere else, and a hundred Muslims had been killed, nobody would have attributed the loss to any special cause. But had the Muslims suffered any loss on the occasion of Conquest of Makkah, the pagans would have said: "Look, the companions of Muhammad have had the same fate as the People of the Elephant." So the Holy Prophet arranged the things in such a way that there were no casualties on either side. Only Khalid bin Walid killed out of malice two or three persons in the outskirts of Makkah, where a few persons were showing resistance. When the Holy Prophet heard the news, he denounced Khalid's action and said: *"Allah, I do not hold myself answerable for what he has done. I am not happy with his action."*

This was the reason why from psychological point of view the Conquest of Makkah produced an extraordinary impact on the people of Arabia. They were tremendously impressed by the fact that the Holy Prophet was able to occupy Makkah and that too without suffering any loss. Consequently other people of the Arabian Peninsula also surrendered themselves. They began to come to Medina in large number and embraced Islam.

The Holy Quran says: ***"Those who spent and fought before the victory are not upon a, level with the rest of you. Such are greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards."*** (Surah al Hadid, 57:10)

As before the Conquest of Makkah the Muslims were still a small community, they performed all good deeds because of their strong faith. But after the conquest the situation underwent a change. People were pouring in and embracing Islam. Anyhow, their Islam did not have the same value as the Islam of those who embraced it before the conquest. Therefore there is no doubt that the Conquest of Makkah was a great victory of Islam. We also do not dispute this fact.

As we have said, some people hold that it is the day of the conquest to which Islam has

attached so much importance and said: *"This day those who disbelieve are in despair of ever harming your religion; so fear them not and have fear of Me! This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, and have chosen Islam for you as a religion."*

But as we have pointed out there is nothing in the text or in history to prove that this verse refers to the Conquest of Makkah. Further, a part of this verse does not support the contention of these people. The words, 'I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, show that by then everything about religion had been revealed and nothing was left unsaid, but we know for certain many religious instructions were revealed subsequent to the Conquest of Makkah. This position does not tally with the words, I have completed My favour to you. When somebody says that he has completed a building, he does not refer to a building that is still incomplete. Many verses of the Qur'an, including those of the Surah al-Ma'idah, which is a lengthy surah, and contains a good number of rules of law, were revealed after the Conquest of Makkah. How can this verse which is a part of the Surah al-Maidah relate to the Conquest of Makkah which took place in the eight year of the Hijra while this surah was revealed towards the end of the tenth year. Even if we say that the verse under review alone was revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, the perfection of Divine favour still does not tally with this event.

There is another difficulty in interpreting 'this day' by the day of the Conquest of Makkah. The verse says: This day the unbelievers lost hope of harming your religion. Now the question is whether it is a fact that the disbelievers lost every hope of resisting Islam on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. It is true that the Conquest of Makkah was a victory of far reaching effect, but is it also a fact that the disbelievers on that day lost every hope that Islam would ever be vanquished? That does not seem to be the case.

(iii) Recitation of Surah al-Baraat by Imam Ali

There is another day which is regarded very important, and so it was. It is said that 'this day' possibly means the day on which the Surah al-Bara'at was recited by Imam Ali at Mina in 9 A. H. The conquest of Makkah was a military victory. It established Islam as a military force and even as a moral power. But the Holy Prophet still lived under the terms of the Peace Treaty which he had concluded with the infidels. Under this treaty the disbelievers had the right of entering Makkah, circumambulating Ka'bah and even of participating in the Hajj ceremonies. The Muslims performed Hajj according to Islamic law and the disbelievers performed it according to their own rites. In 9 A.H. Surah Bara'at was revealed. At that time it was decided that Imam Ali should go to Mina, and recite this Surah there, publicly proclaiming that thenceforth the pagans had no right to take part in the Hajj ceremonies, which were an exclusive privilege of the Muslims.

Generally it is said that the Holy Prophet first dispatched Abu Bakr at the head of the Hajj

caravan. He was still on his way when the verse banning pilgrimage to Makkah by the pagans was revealed. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators of the Quran as to whether Abu Bakr took Surah Baraat with him or he went only as the Amir of Hajj. In any case it is unanimously held by the Shi'ah ad the Sunnis and is considered to be a point of excellence going in favour of Imam Ali, that the Holy Prophet on his own personal camel sent him to Mina as his special envoy. The Holy Prophet said to him: *"You must go because I have been Divinely instructed that this surah is to be recited by none except you or someone related to you"*. Imam Ali proceeded and met Abu Bakr while he was still on his way. The story goes that Abu Bakr was in a tent when the Holy Prophet's special camel uttered a loud cry. Abu Bakr, who was familiar with this cry, came out to find that Imam Ali had come. He was set aback, and thought that there must be something very important. He said to Imam Ali: "Is there any special news?" Imam Ali said: "I have been detailed to recite Surah Bara'at to the people." Abu Bakr said: "Has anything been revealed against me?" "No", said Imam Ali. Here there is again some difference of opinion. The Sunnis say that Imam Ali proceeded on his way and recited the surah according to his plan. In the mean-time Abu Bakr continued his journey, though he had lost one of his assignments. But the Shi'ah believe, and many of the Sunnis also as mentioned in al-Mizan the commentary on the Qur'an that Abu Bakr returned from there, called on the Holy Prophet and said: "Messenger of Allah, has anything been revealed in this surah against me?" The Holy Prophet said: "No".

The day on which Surah Bara'at was proclaimed, was an extraordinary day for the Muslims, because on that day the infidels were debarred from taking part in Hajj ceremonies and entering the holy precincts. It was made clear to them that they could no longer be allowed to lead a polytheistic life. Islam does not tolerate polytheism.

It accepts co-existence with Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, but not with paganism. Some people say that perhaps 'this day' means the day on which surah Bara'at was revealed. In reply to them it may be said that this presumption is not in consonance with the words of the Quran which says: I have completed My favour to you, for many religious instructions were received subsequently. This day must be one of the last days of the Holy Prophet's lifetime after which no fresh religious instructions should have been received.[35]

These explanations of 'this day' have no textual indication or historical evidence to support them.

Shi'ah Explanation

In this connection there is another explanation about which the Shi'ah claim that it is supported by the contents of the verses in question as well as history. Therefore let us consider this explanation in two parts. First let us see what history says and then what the Quranic verses say.

(i) If we consider this question from historical point of view, we can find a great deal of evidence in favour of our explanation. Most of the books written on this subject emphasize that history and traditions both agree that the following Qur'anic verse was revealed at Ghadir al-Khum: This day the unbelievers have lost hope of ever harming your religion; so fear them not and have fear of Me! This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you; and have chosen for you Islam as a religion. The research work, al-Ghadir has proved this point. Apart from the books of traditions, the books of history also tell us the same story. The *History of Ya'qubi* is one of the oldest and the most reliable books on Islamic history, and is regarded as authentic both by the Shi'ah and the Sunnis. It consists of two volumes both of which have been translated into Persian by the late Dr. Ayati. The book is superb and was written in the early third century, apparently during the period between the end of Mamun's reign and the early period of that of Mutawakkil. This book which is a book of history, not of tradition, is one of those books which have mentioned the event of Ghadir al-Khum. Many other books including those written by the Sunnis also have mentioned this incident.

As the tradition says, when the Holy Prophet returning from his farewell pilgrimage[36] reached a place situated near Juhfah[37] and known as Ghadir al-Khum he asked the caravan to halt and announced that he wanted to talk to the people on a subject. Then he ordered that a pulpit be arranged for him.

Accordingly a raised platform of pack saddles etc. was prepared. The Holy Prophet mounted it and talked in detail. He said: "Do I not have more authority over you than yourselves?" All those present said: "Yes, you have." Then the Holy Prophet said: "This Ali is the master of him whose master I am." This was the occasion when this Qur'anic verse was revealed: This day the unbelievers lost all hope of ever harming your religion; so fear them not and have fear of Me! This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you.

If we want to discuss this question from historical point of view, we should study those books which have mentioned this event, especially those written by the Sunnis. Quotations from these books can be found in the books like al-Ghadir, which was published in Mashhad a few years back and is an excellent worth-reading summary of this question.

The argument of the Shi'ah is based on the historical background of this verse. They say that they find that the phrase, 'this day' does not mean today. Then what day does it mean? When a reference is made to the occasion for the revelation of this verse, it is found that not one or two but tens of continuous reports say that this verse was revealed at Ghadir al-Khum on the day the Holy Prophet appointed Imam Ali as his successor.

(ii) Internal Evidence Existing In the Verse

In the verse itself there are internal indications which corroborate what is confirmed by

history. The verse in question says: This day unbelievers lost all hope of ever harming your religion. Let us compare this verse to a number of other verses which warned the Muslims and said that the believers including the People of the Book and others were always intriguing against them and loved to turn them away from their religion: ***"Many of the people of the Book long to make you disbelievers after your belief, through envy on their own account."*** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:109)

Thus we see that while several other verses of the Quran say that the disbelievers long to destroy the religion of the Muslims, the verse under discussion says that now they have lost all hope of harming it and their hostile activities against the Muslims have come to an end. So fear them not and have fear of Me. Allah says: Have fear of Me. What does that mean? Is Allah an enemy of His own religion? No. This verse stipulates the same basic principle regarding Allah's favour that has been mentioned in so many other verses. One such verse says: ***"Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their hearts."*** (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:11) Giving the reason for this another verse says: ***"That is because Allah never withdrawn the grace He has bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts."*** (Surah al-Anfal, 8:53)

Allah says that He does not withdraw any favour bestowed by Him on a people unless they themselves by their own doings want it to be withdrawn. This is one of the basic principles mentioned in the Qur'an.

Specific (Mohkamat) and Ambiguous (Mutashabihat) Verse

In connection with this verse it appears to be necessary to mention a point which may be found useful on many occasions. As a tradition says, some verses of the Qur'an explain some other verses. The Quran is a Book which is manifest and manifesting. It itself says that its verses are of two types: specific and ambiguous. It calls the specific verses the mother verses, which is of course a queer expression: ***"Allah is He who revealed the Book to you, some of its verses are specific and they are the mother of the Book, and others ambiguous."*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:7).

The ambiguous verses are those which can be interpreted in different ways, while a specific verse can be interpreted only in one way. The Qur'an calls the specific verses mother verses because with their help the ambiguous verses can be interpreted. In case we come across a verse of the Qur'an which can be interpreted in several ways, we have no right to fix its meaning. We should refer to other verses to find out how it can best be expounded. An ambiguous (*Mutashabih*) verse does not mean a vague or an unintelligible verse. It only means a verse that can be interpreted in more than one ways resembling each other.

For example there are several verses in the Qur'an relating to Absolute Divine Will which state that everything depends on the Will and Pleasure of Allah. They make no exception.

One of such verses is the following verse which is ambiguous for this very reason: ***"(Muhammad) Say: 0 Lord! Owner of sovereignty! You bestow sovereignty on whomsoever you Will and withdraw sovereignty from whomsoever You Will. You exalt whomsoever You Will and You abase whomsoever You Will. In Your Hand is all that is good. No doubt You are able to do everything."*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:26).

This verse is ambiguous or *mutashabih* because it can be interpreted in more than one ways. It says only that everything depends on the Will of Allah. This is possible in two way: One way is to say that Allah's Will is absolutely unconditional. Some people have interpreted this verse in that way and have inferred from it the wrong conclusion that it is possible that in the presence of all the conditions conducive to honour, disgrace appears and similarly it is possible that all the conditions conducive to humiliation are followed by honour and power. According to them, success in this world and the Hereafter has no pre-requisite conditions, for everything depends on the Will of Allah. As a result it is possible that a people or an individual attains complete success in his worldly affairs without any pre-requisite conditions or fails utterly without any tangible reason. Similarly a people may be taken to the peak of Paradise or to the lowest level of Hell for absolutely no reason. Unfortunately some Muslims called Asharites have drawn this conclusion from this verse. They say that it would not be something impossible if the Holy Prophet goes to Hell or Abu Jahl goes to Heaven. But this is a wrong interpretation of the verse, which only says that everything depends on the Will of Allah, but is silent as to how this Will on which success and failure, honour and disgrace depend, actually operates. That is why it can be interpreted in several ways.

But when we refer to other verses of the Qur'an, they serve as its mother verses and explain what this verse actually signifies. For example one verse expressly says: *That is because Allah never changes the grace He has bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts.* Another verse says: *Surely Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts.* Each of these two verses says something which the other verse does not say. The second verse says that Allah does not change the condition of a people whether it is good or bad, unless they themselves take action to change it. Otherwise Allah neither withdraws His favour nor disfavour. Only people themselves change their condition. The first verse is not concerned with the unhappy condition. It talks only of Allah's grace. But it mentions an additional point. It says: That is because Allah never changes... Allah is not such as to withdraw His grace from any people for no reason, because that would be against His wisdom, His perfection and His Divinity. These are the mother verses in relation to the verse under discussion. The verses relating to Allah's Will say only that everything depends on His Will. Other verses explain how this Will operates and what law it has. This point has been expressed in the Qur'an at several places in the form of a firm principle. According to it those who are grateful to Allah for His bounties, that is those who put them to a proper use, will continue to enjoy them, but those who are ungrateful and abuse His bounties, will be deprived of them.

So the verse, This day the unbelievers have lost all hope of ever harming your religion; so fear them not, and have fear of Me, means that the unbelievers do no longer pose any threat to the Muslim world. 'Have fear of Me.' means: be afraid of yourselves, for if there is any danger now, that lies in your being ungrateful to Allah and not taking full advantage of His bounties. Should the Muslim not act properly, the law is bound to come into force against them. Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts. Henceforward no danger from outside threatens Muslim society, but danger from inside does threaten it.

Question and Answer

Question: We absolutely agree with you that Imamat is a supreme leadership that covers this worldly as well as the next worldly affairs. The arguments advanced by you show that it was the exclusive right of Imam Ali to assume this leadership. Then why did he decline to do so when people offered to take their allegiance to him after the assassination of Uthman?

Answer: This question has been discussed in the book, *Khilafat and Wilayat* which has been published lately. The answer to your question is clear from what Imam Ali, the

Commander of the Faithful, himself said. When people came to him to pledge their allegiance to him, he said: *"Leave me alone and look for somebody else, for we are looking forward to a many-sided situation."* It is a wonderful expression! What he

meant was that the situation was complicated, and it was necessary to study it from various angels. He continued to say: *"The atmosphere is overcast and the route has changed beyond recognition."* In the end he said: *"If I rule over you, I would follow the way I know and would not act as you want."*

What Imam Ali said shows that he fully realized that since the time of the Holy Prophet the situation had deteriorated a great deal and undergone a complete change. Imam Ali made his position quite clear. He wanted the people to give him an undertaking that they would follow him because it was that what the pledging of their allegiance meant. He did not say that his Khilafat would be void if they would not pledge their allegiance to him. He wanted them to make a sincere promise that they would give him an unflinching support and follow his dictates.

All Shi'ah and Sunni historians agree that Umar appointed a six-member council for the selection of his successor. Imam Ali himself was one of its members. Three members of this council withdrew in favour of three others. Zubayr withdrew in favour of Imam Ali; Talhah in favour of Uthman and Sa'd ibn Waqqas in favour of Abdur Rahman ibn 'Awf. Out of the three remaining persons Abdur Rahman said that he was not a candidate. Now two persons remained. The choice was with Abdur Rahman. Whomsoever he selected, he would become

the Caliph. First he came to Imam Ali and said: "I am ready to pledge my allegiance to you provided you give me a word that you would act according to Allah's Book, His Prophet's Sunnah and the policy pursued by Abu Bakr and Umar." Imam Ali said: *"I am willing to accept the condition that I would follow Allah's Book and His Prophet's Sunnah (path), but leave aside the policy of Abu Bakr and Umar."* Then Abdur Rahman went to Uthman and said the same thing to him. Uthman willingly agreed to act according to Allah's Book, His Prophet's Sunnah and the policy followed by Abu Bakr and Umar. Although Uthman readily promised to follow the policy of Abu Bakr and Umar, but as Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati has pointed out, he actually did not act accordingly. If we make a comparison, we will find that Imam Ali behaved exactly like the Holy Prophet. His conduct was closer to that of the *Shaykhayn* (Abu Bakr and Umar) also, as far as they followed the Holy Prophet's style. Imam Ali did not accept the condition that he would act as the Shaykhayn acted, because to do so would have meant the endorsement of their deviations also, and as such he could not oppose those deviations any more. For example, disparity and discrimination between the *Muhajirs* (immigrants) and the *Ansar* (helpers) was introduced during Umar's time. Imam Ali was severely against this policy. Has he said that he would follow the policy pursued by Abu Bakr and Umar, he would have been compelled to affirm the actions taken during Umar's time. Imam Ali did not want to tell a lie nor could he go back on his word. That was the reason why he said that he did not want to become the Caliph.

We know that Abu Bakr and Umar had some deviations. Still after Umar's death Imam Ali was not willing to make a promise that he would act as Abu Bakr and Umar did. As such it was but natural that after Uthman's death when the condition had immensely deteriorated, and in his own words the future was many-sided, Imam Ali told those who wanted him to act as they desired, that if he took over the government, he would do what he himself deemed correct not what they wanted.

These words of Imam Ali do not mean that he rejected the offer of government. He only explained his position.

Question: We find that the Qur'an has laid great stress on the question of unity. How did it happen that in spite of its importance the question of Imam Ali's Imamat was not expressly mentioned in the Quran, nor did the Holy Prophet refer to this subject on as many occasions as he should normally have?

Answer: Here two points have been raised. The first point is: Why has this question not been expressly mentioned in the Qur'an? The other point is whether the Holy Prophet has or has not referred to this subject on several occasions and whether the Holy Qur'an has or has not mentioned this subject at several places. As far as the second point is concerned. We say that it is a historical question. Even many of the Sunnis admit that the Holy Prophet referred to it on several occasions, not only at Ghadir al-Khum, but other places also. The details are in the books on the question of Imamat. On the occasion of Tabuk addressing Imam Ali, he said: *"You are to me what Harun was to Musa, although there will be no prophet after me."* On the

occasion of the Battle of Khayber he affirmed Imam Ali's position by saying: *"I will give the flag tomorrow to a man who loves Allah and His Prophet and whom Allah and His Prophet love."* Even during the early period of Islam addressing the Quraysh he said: *"Whosoever of you pledges his allegiance to me first, he will be my legatee and Vazir* (according to a report he said: *will be my legatee, Vazir and caliph)."* Such a person was Imam Ali only.

The same case is with the Qur'an. This question has been mentioned not only at one or two but at several places. The only question is why the Qur'an has not mentioned Imam Ali by name. Incidentally this question has been dealt with in the book, *Khilafat and Wilayat* also. As we believe that there has been no alteration in the Qur'an and nothing has been added to it or subtracted from it, we are sure that Imam Ali's name has not been mentioned any where in it.

Two reasons of it have been given. One of them, which has been fully explained in Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati's book is that the Qur'an has its own style. It always deals with such subjects in the form of a principle, and not as an individual case. This is in itself a merit of the Qur'an. When the verse, Today I have completed your religion for you, was revealed, the unbelievers were disappointed because they were always saying that so long as that man (Prophet) was alive, nothing could be done, but as soon as he died everything would be finished. But their last hope was foiled when they saw that the Holy Prophet had taken a step to ensure the continued existence of his community and had appointed a successor of him.

Another point which the Sunni writers also have mentioned is that during the last days of his life the Holy Prophet was worried about the future of his followers and had that fear which has been expressed in the Qur'an by the words, 'And have fear of Me'. According to a report which the Sunnis have also related, Abu Muzayhabah, a slave of 'Ayisha, says: "During the last days of the Holy Prophet's life once I saw him coming out of his room and going towards the Baqi graveyard at midnight. I said to myself that I would not leave him alone. So I followed him. From a long distance I saw him praying for the forgiveness of Allah for those who were buried in the Baqi'. I heard him saying what meant: "You are fortunate to have gone away and achieved salvation. Bad times are imminent like pieces of dark night." This report shows that the Holy Prophet visualized the impending ugly events, the dispute about Khilafat being one of them no doubt.

In reply to the question why the Qur'an has not mentioned Imam Ali's name, two explanations have been given: Firstly it is the special style of the Qur'an to describe various problems in the form of principles; and secondly the Holy Prophet and Almighty Allah did not like to mention his name expressly because they knew that in any case the question of Khilafat was going to be distorted and misinterpreted out of selfishness. As Prophetic sayings have been misinterpreted, so a Qur'anic verse expressly naming Imam Ali also would have been misinterpreted. The Holy Prophet said: *"This Ali is the master of him whose master I am."* Can there be any thing more express than this?

Anyhow there is a lot of difference between violating an express saying of the Holy Prophet and violating a verse naming Imam Ali on the day very next to the demise of the Prophet. That is why I have quoted the following event in my preface to the book, *Khilafat and Wilayat*:

A Jew with a view to upbraid the Muslims for the ugly events of the early period of Islam once during his caliphate said to Imam Ali: "As soon as you buried your Prophet you began to quarrel about him." The Imam gave a wonderful reply. He said: *"We were not at variance with him. We disagreed only about the instructions we received from him. But your feet were still wet with sea-water, when you said to your Prophet: "Appoint for us a deity similar to the deities our opponents have." Thereupon your Prophet said: "Surely you are an ignorant people."* So there is much difference between what happened to the Muslims, and what happened to the Jews. In other words, the Muslims did not differ about the Prophet himself. They differed about the meaning and significance of his instructions only. Hence what they did could be explained away by saying that they misunderstood what the Holy Prophet had said. (Though actually that was not the case).

Anyhow, there is a great deal of difference between misunderstanding or misinterpreting a saying of the Prophet and between ignoring or altering an express verse of the Qur'an.

Question: The above question may be expressed in this way. It is true that the Qur'an must lay down principles only. But the principle of succession and government in Islam is certainly of great importance. A name may not be mentioned by the Qur'an. But the procedure must have been laid down in very clear terms. For example it could be revealed to the Holy Prophet that he should designate his successor, and that successor also should designate his successor, and so on till the end. Similarly it should also have been laid down clearly whether the question of succession is to be decided by designation or election. In short, the question of succession should not have been left vague, because it is not such a simple question for Islam which is a religion that has come to rule. The problem is not whether the name of Imam Ali should have been mentioned or not. But in view of the difference of opinion in regard to the method of succession and the form of government it was necessary that a clear procedure was laid down. At least it could be revealed to the Holy Prophet that it was his duty to designate his successor. Even in that case the people might not have agreed as to who was the successor. But it would have been clear that the Holy Prophet himself had appointed his successor and that there was no question of any sort of election by the Muslims. Similarly there was another question, whether the Holy Prophet's direct successor should nominate his successor or the next Imam, or should leave the question to the choice of the people. As far as I know this problem also has been left vague in the Quran. In any case no procedure has been expressly laid down.

The second point is that some time back I read a book relating to the system of government in Islam. In that book many sayings of Imam Ali and others were quoted, all to the effect that

the question of Khilafat depended upon the Muslims and that it was up to them to express their opinion about it. For example Imam Ali said on various occasions: *"A Caliph was to be appointed by the Muslims and selected by the people concerned."* He also said that the question of Khilafat was not to be decided by him, and it was up to the Muslims to hold consultation and express their opinion about it. In this book many arguments have been collected in support of the view that the questions of government was an elective question and no individual was authorized to designate his successor. What is your opinion in this regard?

The third point is: If we presume that the twelve Imams have succeeded one another, what is the permanent procedure now for the appointment of the head of Muslim society? Does there a Divine ordinance exist in this respect? Will the future appointments be based on the principle of election or some other principle? Was it stipulated that the twelve infallible Imams would be appointed by a Divine ordinance and then, for example, during the occultation of the twelfth Imam, election would be held. Has it been expressly laid down anywhere? Is it our own inference that a qualified mujtahid fulfilling all the necessary conditions should be the head of the government during the occultation of the twelfth Imam? In fact the Qur'an should have given a constitutional law to the Muslims directing them that the first twelve Imams following the Holy Prophet would be appointed by a Divine ordinance and then the Muslims would be free to elect their ruler, or it should have been expressly said that then the jurist of the Muslims would be their ruler. But, anyhow the issue remains unsolved since the death of the eleventh Imam, and has caused dissension and disputes. How is this problem to be resolved from our point of view?

Answer: We have already dealt with some of these points, but you have again turned the question of Imamat into a question of the government only. As we have already pointed out the question of Imamat is different from that of government and the question of government in the presence of an Imam is exactly like that in the presence of the Prophet. In other words both the cases involve a situation governed by a special law. Just as the question as to who should be the head of the State does not arise during the lifetime of the Prophet, similarly in the presence of an Imam of those characteristics in which the Shi'ah believe, this question is only secondary and hypothetical.

The questions of the form of government can be considered only with reference to the times when no Imam is present, for we do not have any time when no Imam is in existence; but there can be a time when no Imam is present, and that is why we do not deny the significance of the Qur'anic verse saying that the affairs of the Muslims are settled by consultation. But obviously only those affairs are to be settled by consultation which are not covered by any Divine law or command, not those in respect of which some Qur'anic ordinance, or instruction exists.

As for the points mentioned in the book, *Government in Islam*, I have not studied this book thoroughly. Anyhow, this book has unfortunately been unilateral to a great extent. It has produced only a certain set of arguments and totally missed the arguments going contrary to

them. This is a big defect, for one should give all the arguments and then should see which of them are stronger and more reliable.

Another defect of this book is that many quotations in it have been taken out of their context. I have not made a thorough study of the book, but those who have made, say that the heads and tails of many sentences reproduced in this book, have been cut off, with a result that their meanings have been distorted. If these missing parts were added to these sentences, they would have quite a different significance. Furthermore, no Imam is present, regarding which there is no dispute.

[35] The first part of the book, Khilafat and Wilayat, which has recently been published, contains Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati's lectures which he delivered at Husayniyah Irshad some four years ago. In his lectures he dealt with the same subject with which I am dealing. Therefore the two books maybe considered to be supplementary to each other.

[36] The Holy Prophet performed his farewell pilgrimage during th6 last year of his life, some two months before his demise. He died on 28 Safar or according to the Sunnis on 12 Rabi'ul Awwal. He reached Ghadir al-Khum on 18th Zil Hijjah, that is two months and 10 days before his demise or two months and 24 days according to what the Sunnis say.

[37] Some of you might have been to Juhfah. I visited the place during my second Hajj journey. Our visit to Medina was delayed. So we took an opportunity to visit Jaddah. There is some difference in the juristic opinion whether or not one can assume the ritual state of ihram at jaddah. Actually it may be said that this is not a juristic difference but a geographical one. The ritual state of ihram can be assumed from any point lying parallel to any of the miqats. A man who is well-versed in the geography of Arabia, may be able to say definitely whether or not Jaddah fulfils this condition. In the beginning we ourselves did not believe that it did, but later when we obtained maps of Arabia in Makkah and Medina, we found that Jaddah was parallel to one of the miqats, provided those maps were accurate. If those who proceed from Jaddah to Makkah, want to assume the ritual state of ihram from one of the actual miqats, they come from Jaddah to Juhfah, which lies on the way to Medina and is the miqat of the people of Syria. Ghadir al-Khum is situated near Juhfah. It is the place at which the Muslims returning from Makkah after performing pilgrimage disperse. Some go to Medina and others to their respective places.

Imamat in the Quran

In the previous meeting we discussed the verse, Today I have perfected your religion and completed My favour to you and have chosen Islam for you as a religion, and said that the internal and external evidence relating to this verse showed that, as reported by the Shi'ah and the Sunnis both, it was revealed in connection with the Ghadir al-Khum event.

As at present we are discussing the Quranic verses on which the Shi'ah arguments about Imamat are based, We propose to quote two or three more verses in order to elucidate the trend of the Shi'ah arguments.

One of these verses is a verse of the Surah al-Maidah which comes some 60 verses after the above quoted verse. The verse runs as follows:

"0 Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message." (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:67)

It is necessary to make a few preliminary remarks which will be helpful to understand this verse and the previous one.

Special Position of the Verses Relating to the Prophet's Progeny

A point that is really somewhat mysterious is that the Qur'anic verses relating to the Prophet's progeny especially the verses which from our Shi'ah point of view relate to Imam Ali, have a special way of expression. Though these verses have enough internal evidence to indicate what they signify, yet they have been inserted in between some other verses dealing with some other points. That is why effort has to be made to get at their significance. This special feature has been admirably dealt with by Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati in his book, Imamat and Khilafat. Others have also mentioned this point, but he is perhaps the first to deal with it in Persian. This feature also provides an answer to those who ask why Imam Ali's name has not been expressly mentioned in the Qur'an.

The Verse of Tathir (Purification)

For example, we have a verse known as the verse of Tathir (purification): **"People of the**

house, Allah wants to remove all kinds of uncleanliness from you and to purify you thoroughly". (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33)

Here purification means a particular kind of purification that has been mentioned by Allah. It does not mean an ordinary or a medical cleansing. That is not what is meant. In fact it means the removal of all that is regarded by the Qur'an as rijs or rujz, that is all kinds of dogmatic, moral and practical sins. That is why it is said that this verse indicates the infallibility of the members of the Prophet's Household and their being far above all sorts of impurities.

Suppose we are neither the Shi'ah nor the Sunnis but are some Christian orientalists who want to see what the Divine Scripture of the Muslims says. We come across this verse in the Qur'an and then when we refer to Islamic history and the Muslim traditions, we find that not only the partisans and followers of the Prophet's progeny, known as the Shi'ah, but even the members of that sect which is not a special supporter of the Prophet's progeny while mentioning the occasion of the revelation of the above verse, state in their most authentic books that it refers to Imam Ali, Fatimah Zahra', Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn and the Holy Prophet himself. There is a Sunni tradition which says when this verse was revealed, Umm Salamah[38] one of the Holy Prophet's wives came to him and asked him if the verse was applicable to her also. The Holy Prophet replied that she was blessed but she was not included among those to whom the verse applied. The authorities which have reproduced this tradition are more than one or two. Many reports to this effect are found in the books of the Sunnis.

We find that the above-quoted verse is mixed with some other preceding and following verses relating to the Holy Prophet's wives. **"0 you wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women.** (Of course the verse does not mean to say that the Prophet's wives are superior to other women.) **0 you wives of the Prophet! Whosoever of you commits a sin, the punishment for her will be doubled. The punishment will be doubled, because she not only commits that particular sin, but also violates the sanctity of her husband and is guilty of sacrilege.** Similarly, **"Whosoever of you is submissive to Allah and His messenger and does right, We shall give her double reward"**. She will be doubly rewarded because a virtuous act of hers actually consists of two acts. This case is similar to that of the sayyids who are said to be doubly rewarded for their good deeds and doubly punished for their evil ones. That is not because a sin committed by them is different from that committed by others, but is due to the fact that their sin is twofold. For example, if a sayyid, God forbid, drinks wine, he besides committing that sin, is guilty of sacrilege also, for he is a descendant of the Holy Prophet, and any person who sees him acting openly against the Holy Prophet's teachings, gets a very wrong impression of Islam.

In these verses all the pronouns are of the feminine gender. O you wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women if you have fear of Allah. Obviously the wives of the Holy Prophet are being addressed here. After two or three verses the pronouns suddenly change into the masculine gender and we arrive at this verse: People of the house, Allah wants to remove all kinds of uncleanliness from you and to purify you thoroughly. Then again the

feminine pronouns are used twice. The Qur'an does not do anything haphazardly. In this verse we notice two changes. Firstly here the expression, People of the House has been used, whereas previously the Wives of Prophet were addressed all along. Secondly the feminine pronouns have been replaced by the masculine pronouns. These changes are not without a reason. Actually this verse deals with a subject different from that which was dealt with by the previous verses. The verses preceding and following this verse prescribe certain duties for the wives of the Holy Prophet and inter alia imply threat, fear, hope and command. Addressing them the Quran says: **"And stay in your houses and do not display your embellishments in the pre-Islamic way."** (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33)

This instruction implies an order as well as a threat. The Holy Prophet's wives have been told that if they would behave well, such and such would be the result, but if they would behave differently the consequences also would be different. As such this passage of the Quran implies fear as well as hope.

This verse, that is the verse of tathir or purification is more than a simple eulogy. It signifies that the members of the Prophet's progeny are infallible and free from every sin and error. It is an independent statement and has no connection with the verses preceding and following it. Those verses were addressed to the Holy Prophet's wives, and this verse is addressed to the 'People of the Prophet's progeny'. In those verses the feminine pronouns were used, but in this verse the pronouns are masculine. Anyhow, this verse which has no connection with the verses preceding or following it, has been inserted into the midst of them. It may be called a parenthetical sentence. We all know that sometimes it happens that a speaker speaking on a subject makes a sudden digression and then again resumes the subject on which he was speaking. That is why our Imams have emphatically stated that it is possible that some verses of the Qur'an deal with one subject in the beginning, with another in the middle and with a third in the end. A great deal of stress has been laid on this point in connection with the interpretation of the Quran.

Not only do our traditions and our Imams say that this verse is not connected with the verses preceding and following it and that it deals with quite a different subject relating to these to whom it is addressed, but all the Sunni sources also have reported this fact.

Another example of a parenthetical verse is: **"On this day I have perfected your religion."** (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:3)

Here also we find the same case, rather a little more amazing. The verses preceding this verse deal with very simple and ordinary rules of law: "**The beast of cattle is made lawful to you . . . . . . Forbidden to you are carrion and blood and swine-flesh and that which has been dedicated to any other than Allah and the strangled and the dead through beating and the dead through failing from a height and that which has been killed by the goring of horns . . . . "** (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:1-2)

Then all of a sudden the topic changes and we come across the following verses: **"Today the disbelieves have despaired of harming your religion; so fear them not and fear Me. On this day I have perfected your religion, completed My favour on you and have chosen Islam as your religion."** (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:3)

Then the theme which was being discussed earlier, is once again resumed. Basically these two verses are not in keeping with the verses preceding or following them. Evidently they have been inserted in the midst of the verses dealing with a totally different point. The same was the case with the verse we were just talking about. We find that it was inserted between other verses in such a way that if it was removed, the other verses would not get disjointed. Similarly if the verse. **On this day I have completed. . . .** is taken out, the harmonious flow of the verses preceding and following it will not be disturbed. It is a verse inserted in the midst of other verses in such a way that it is neither a tail-piece of the verse preceding it, nor a prelude to the verse following it. It deals with an entirely different subject. The internal indications of the verse itself as well as the reports of the Shi'ah and Sunni sources, all support the view that it is an independent verse. But why has this verse after all been inserted in between the verses with which it does not have any connection? There must be some reason for that and a good reason too.

Reason:

The reason to which our Imams also have alluded can be inferred from the Quran itself. Hence, out of all Islamic precepts, the divine commands, relating to the special position of the Holy Prophet's progeny and the question of Imam Ali's Imamat, had the least chance of being implemented. Owing to their deep-rooted prejudices the Arabs seemed to be the least prepared to accept these ideas. Although the Holy Prophet had received Divine instructions regarding Imam Ali, he apprehended that if he made them known, he would be accused of nepotism by the hypocrites mentioned in the Qur'an, in spite of the fact that he never gave preference to himself over others. In keeping with the Islamic teachings it was his habit not to make any discrimination, and this quality of his was a very important factor in his success. To proclaim Imam Ali as his successor was a Divine command, but he knew that the people of weak faith would as usual say that he wanted to distinguish himself. We have seen that in the above verse, the words on this day I have perfected your religion, were preceded by the words, this day the disbelievers are in despair of ever harming your religion; so fear them not and fear Me. What is meant is that the disbelievers have lost every hope of their success against Islam, and so fear them not and fear Me. As pointed out earlier, it is a Divine way of Allah to withdraw His bounties and favours, from those whose inner condition goes bad. Such people may be deprived of even Islam, which is also a Divine favour. To say: fear Me is a way of saying: fear yourselves. In other words, the Muslims no longer faced any external danger, but they were threatened by an internal one.

It may be noted that this verse is a part of the Surah al-Ma'ida, the last surah revealed to the

Holy Prophet, and it was revealed sometime during the last two or three months of the Holy Prophet's lifetime. By that time Islam had gained a good deal of power.

The idea that the Muslims face a danger only from within, not from without, is conveyed by another verse also, which we have quoted earlier. That verse said: **"Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not, it would be as though you have not conveyed My message. Allah will protect you from men."** (Surah al-Maida 5:67)

It may be mentioned that in the Qur'an there is no other verse urging the Holy Prophet to undertake a particular task. It appears from the tone of this verse as if somebody was being impelled to do a thing, but he was wavering. In this verse the Holy Prophet is being asked to make known what has been revealed to him. He is also being threatened that if he did not do so, he would be regarded to have failed in his apostleship. At the same time he is being assured that he will be protected and therefore he need not have any fear. In the previous verse the Muslims were told not to fear the disbelievers. As such the Holy Prophet could not be expected to have any fear of them. But this verse shows that he was still apprehensive and uneasy about something. Naturally he could not be afraid of the disbelievers, he was actually only conscious of the danger of turmoil on the part of those who were not willing to accept Imam Ali's succession. I cannot say whether these people were also disbelievers in their hearts, but somehow they were unable to swallow the idea of Imam Ali's Imamat.

Historical Evidence

Incidentally the historical events also tell the same story. In other words the sociology of the Muslims shows the same thing. We see that Umar said: "We did not elect Ali as a precautionary measure in the interest of Islam." The Quraysh could not tolerate Imam Ali. Therefore they did not accept him.

Quraysh did not deem it proper that Prophethood and Imamat both should be in the same family." What he meant to say was that Bani Hashim had secured a distinction because of Prophethood. Should Khilafat also be in that family, all the distinctions would go to one house. That was the reason why the Quraysh disliked Imam Ali's Imamat. Ibn Abbas gave a very convincing reply to what Umar said and quoted many a Quranic verses in support of his argument.

It appears that the same situation that existed in Muslim society, has been expressed in different ways, by the Qur'an in one way and by Umar in another. For example, a report says Imam Ali was not considered fit to be the Caliph because he had killed so many prominent Arabs in the battles of Islam. The

Arabs being malicious by nature the descendants of those who were killed by him bore malice

against Imam Ali even after they had been converted to Islam. Some Sunnis also advance this plea, and say that although Imam Ali was superior to others and better qualified, yet he was not chosen because he had a large number of enemies.

Thus during the Holy Prophet's time the atmosphere was charged with a feeling of anxiety; and a revolt against the announcement of Imam Ali's succession was apprehended. Perhaps that is the reason why the Qur'an has mentioned the question of Imamat in these verses in such a way that every unbiased man could understand their significance, but still it has avoided to put this question in a way that its rejection by those who were bent upon rejecting it, could become a revolt against Islam and an outright rejection of the Qur'an. In other words the Qur'an has allowed the opponents to conceal their rejection under a thin cover. The same is the reason why the verse of Tathir has also been inserted in the midst of other verses. But every sensible and honest man can detect its real meaning and can see that it is an independent verse. The same is the case with the verse, On this day I have perfected your religion and with the verse, Messenger! Make known what has been revealed to you from your Lord.

The Verse, Your Guardian is Only Allah ....

There are some other verses relating to this subject which are thought-provoking. They make man feel that these verses have some special meaning, which can be comprehended with the help of the continuous reports only. One such verse is as follows: **"Your guardian is only Allah, His Messenger and those who believe, establish prayers and pay the zakat while they are bowing in prayer."** (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:55)

The payment of zakat while bowing is not a usual or normal procedure. Hence it cannot be said that this thing has been mentioned as a general rule. Therefore it is certain that this verse refers to some particular event, but it hints at this event in such a way that its denial may not be regarded as a revolt against the Qur'an. Still every unbiased person can easily come to the conclusion that the verse refers to some unusual event. Those who pay zakat while bowing does not refer to a usual practice. It implies an exceptional event which took place by chance. What was that event? We see that both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis agree that this verse was revealed in connection with Imam Ali.

What The Gnostics Say?

There are some other verses also the significance of which becomes clear only after some deep thinking. That is why the gnostics have since long said that the question of Imamat and Wilayat is the inner side of Islamic law. That is what the Shi'ah also believe. Hence, the gnostics have expressed the idea well. To understand the question of Imamat it is necessary to penetrate into the husk a little to be able to reach the kernel, for basically it is a question that requires deep thinking. Only those who are endowed and blessed with this quality have been

able to understand this question well. They invite others also to reach the depth of this question. Some respond whereas some others do not.

We now propose to look at some other verse, so that the logic of the arguments of the Shi'ah may be fully understood.

The Concept of Imamat

There is a verse in the Quran which is a part of that series of verses which we are at present discussing. The remarkable verse is not connected with Imam Ali's person, but deals with the doctrine of Imamat in the sense which we have already explained and now we propose to explain it briefly.

As we have already said, it is an old mistake of the Muslim scholastic theologians to discuss the question of Imamat in a way as if both the Shi'ah and the Sunnis subscribe to the same conception of Imamat but hold different opinions with regard to its conditions.

The Shi'ah say that an Imam must be infallible and is to be appointed by Divine ordinance whereas the Sunnis do not subscribe to that point of view. The actual fact is that the Sunnis do not believe at all in that conception of Imamat in which the Shi'ah believe. The Imamat in which the Sunnis believe is only to this worldly aspect of the actual Imamat and one of its functions. In the case of Prophethood also we see that the Holy Prophet was the leader of the Muslim community but this leadership or the administration of the State was only one of his functions as a Prophet. His leadership does not mean that Prophethood and leadership are synonymous. Prophethood is a reality which has so many aspects and features. One of the characteristics of a Prophet is that in his presence nobody else can be the ruler or the head of the Muslims. The Sunnis say that Imamat means, no more than the administration of the government and that an Imam is the head of this administration or the ruler of the Muslims. He is to be elected by the Muslims from among themselves. The Sunni concept of an Imam does not go beyond the status of the head of the Muslim State. But according to the Shi'ah Imamat is a rank similar to Prophethood and in some respects, even higher than Prophethood by certain degrees. The high-ranking Prophets are those who were Imams also. Many Prophets were not Imams at all. Even the high ranking Prophets attained the assignment of Imamat long after they had been Prophets.

In short, if we admit that Imamat is like Prophethood, we will have to admit also that as in the presence of a Prophet who has a superhuman aspect, the question who should be the ruler does not arise, similarly in the presence of an Imam, this question is out of question. This question arises only when there is no Imam, either because no Imam exists at all or because the Imam is in occultation as is the case during our times. We should not mix up the question of Imamat with that of government and then ask what the Sunnis say in this respect and what the Shi'ah hold. As a matter of fact the question of the government is different from that of

Imamat. According to the Shi'ah, Imamat is a phenomenon exactly like that of Prophethood, and that too like the highest degree of it. As such we the Shi'ah believe in Imamat whereas the Sunnis do not. It is not that they also believe in it, but the conditions required for an Imam, according to them are different.

Imam In Prophet Ibrahim's Progeny

The verse which we now would like to quote clearly denotes the concept of Imamat in which the Shi'ah believe. The Shi'ah maintain that this verse shows that there does exist a truth called Imamat, and that it has existed not only during the period following the death of the Prophet of Islam, but has been existing since the first appearance of the Prophets and will continue to exist in Prophet Ibrahim's progeny up to the Day of Resurrection. The Holy Qur'an says: **"And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with His commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: I have appointed you an Imam for mankind. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? He said: My covenant includes not the unjust."** (Surah al Baqarah, 11:124)

Prophet Ibrahim's Trials - Command to Migrate to Hijaz

The Qur'an itself has mentioned a number of trials which Prophet Ibrahim had to face. They included his struggle against Namrud and his henchmen who threw him into a burning fire as well as several subsequent events. One of these events was that Ibrahim received an astonishing command which could not be implemented by anybody not fully devoted to Allah. The old man had no children. For the first time his wife, Hagar gave birth to a child at the age of seventy eight. Prophet Ibrahim receives a Divine command to go from Syria to Hijaz, take his wife and that child on the spot where at present Masjidul Haram is located and keep them there and then leave the place. This command was not in keeping with any logic except that of complete self-submission and total devotion. As he was sure that it was a Divine command which he had received through revelation, he carried it out. He said: **"Our Lord: I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near Your Holy House so that they may establish prayers."** (Surah Ibrahim, 14:37)

Command to Slaughter His Son

More astonishing than these events is the story of Prophet Ibrahim's slaughtering his son at Mina. It is in memory of this extraordinary self-surrender that we now sacrifice goats and sheep. (As we perform what we have been told by Allah, there can be no question of why and what for in this connection.) After seeing two or three times in dream as if he was sacrificing his son, Ibrahim was convinced that it was Allah's Command to him to do so. He told his son about it. His son readily agreed and said: Father, do that which you are commanded. Allah willing you will find me of the steadfast. The Qur'an depicts a wonderful picture. When they had both surrendered (to Allah) and he had flung him down upon his face. (At last when

Ibrahim was absolutely sure that he would cut off the head of his son, and Isma'il had no doubt in his mind that his head would be severed, **We called to him: Ibrahim, you have already fulfilled the vision.** (Surah as-Saffat, 37:102-105). What Allah says is that He did not actually want Isma'ils head to be cut off. He only wanted to see that Ibrahim and Isma'il showed their complete submission to His will, which they did.

The Quran expressly says that Allah gave a son to Prophet Ibrahim in his old age. It says when the angels came to him and told him that he would be granted a son by Allah, his wife said:

"Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman and this my husband is an old man? The angels said to her: Do you wonder at the commandment of Allah? The mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house." (Surah Hud, 11:72-73) According to this verse Allah gave a child to Ibrahim when he was an old man. So long as he was young, he did not have any child. When he got a child, he was already a Prophet. In the Qur'an there are fairly a large number of verses about Ibrahim. They show that he got a child towards the end of his life when he was seventy or eighty years old. After that also he lived for ten or twenty years more, Ishaq and Isma'il both grew up during his lifetime. Isma'il becomes so mature to help his father build the Ka'bah.

The Qur'an says: **"And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with his commands, and he fulfilled them. He said: I have appointed you an Imam for mankind. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? He said: My covenant includes not wrong-doers."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124)

What period of Ibrahim's life do these verses refer to? Do they pertain to his early age?

There is no doubt that they refer to that period of his life when he was already a Prophet, for they speak of a revelation. Further, they pertain to the concluding period of his Prophethood, for they speak of the trials through which Prophet Ibrahim had passed. These trials covered his whole life, most important of them having taken place during the declining period of his age. Furthermore in these verses there is a mention of his offspring. That shows that when this conversation took place, he already had at least one child.

In fact according to this verse Prophet Ibrahim was told toward the end of his lifetime: I have made you an Imam for mankind. Thus he was given a fresh assignment. That shows that he was already a Prophet and a Messenger of Allah. But there was still a stage which he had not reached so far. He reached it only after successfully passing through all the trials. Does it not show that according to the Quran there is one more reality the name of which is Imamat? Now what is the meaning of it?

Imamat Is A Divine Covenant

Imamat means the stage of becoming a perfect man and a perfect leader of all others. When Ibrahim was appointed an Imam, he at once thought of his progeny and offspring and said: 'What about my offspring? How about my descendants? He was told: My covenant includes not the wrong doers.

Here Imamat has been described as Allah's covenant. That is why the Shi'ah say that the Imamat in which they believe is Divine. The Qur'an also describes it as "My covenant". It is Allah's covenant, not of the people. If we take into consideration the fact that Imamat is different from the guardianship of the Muslim community, we will not find it surprising that Imamat is a Divine assignment. People ask who is to set up the

government, Allah or people? We say that the question of government is different from that of Imamat. Allah says to Ibrahim: Imamat is My covenant and it will not include the

wrong doers among your children. In reply to Prophet Ibrahim's question Allah neither says 'no', nor 'yes' to him. He makes a discrimination and excludes wrongdoers from the scope of Imamat. Thereafter only the non-wrongdoers of Ibrahim's progeny remained. This verse shows that among them Imamat will always be existing.

In this respect there is one more verse in the Qur'an: **"And He made it a word enduring in his descendants."** (Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:28)

Who is a Wrongdoer?

Now the question is what is meant by a wrongdoer. The Imams (Peace be on them) have based their arguments on the use of this term in this verse. From the point of view of the Qur'an everybody who is unjust to himself or others is a wrongdoer. In common parlance, a wrongdoer is only he who violates the rights of others. But according to the Qur'anic terminology he is also a wrongdoer who is unjust to himself. There are many Qur'anic verses in which those who were guilty of transgression against themselves, have been called wrongdoers.

In connection with Prophet Ibrahim's question about his offspring Allamah Tabataba'i quotes one of his teachers as having said that Prophet Ibrahim's descendants from the point of view of being good or bad can be divided into four categories:

(i) Those who throughout their life have been wrongdoers;

(ii) those who were wrongdoers in the beginning, but became virtuous later;

(iii) those who were virtuous in the beginning but became wrongdoers subsequently; and

(iv) those who were not wrongdoers at any time.

Prophet Ibrahim fully realized the importance of the high office of Imamat which was granted to him after he had been a Prophet for a fairly long time. As such it is impossible that he would ask this position for those of his descendants who were bad throughout their life or who were good at first but turned wrongdoers later. Prophet Ibrahim must have asked this position only for those who were good. Hence his good descendants included: those who had been good throughout their life and those who were bad in the beginning but became good later. It is certain that he could not have asked this position for those who were not included in these two categories. Now we see that the Holy Qur'an says: "My covenant does not include those who have been wrongdoers." It is evident that Ibrahim's question did not include those who had been wrongdoers throughout their life or those who had been good in the beginning, but turned wrongdoers in the later part of their life. Therefore what the Qur'an says amounts to saying that those whose past has not been above reproach, will not get Imamat.

It is on this basis that the Shi'ah argue that those who have been polytheists in any part of their life, are not fit for holding Imamat.

Questions and Answers

What does the infallible mean? Is the conception of infallibility a by-product of our Shi'ah logic or has it any basis which we have further developed and improved? Who is infallible, he who does not commit any sin or he who besides not committing any sin does not commit any mistake too? Some twenty years age I attended a lecture by the late Mirza Abdul Hasan Faroghi, who had made a special study of the question of infallibility and had formed his own opinion about it. He gave a detailed and neat talk. I did not understand 80% of it, but from the 20% that I understood, I came to the conclusion that he defined infallibility in an unfamiliar way. He said that the infallible was not he who did not commit any sin, for there were so many people who never committed a sin during their whole life. Still they were not called infallible. Now I have nothing to do with that talk. I would like His Eminence (Mutahhari) to say who the infallible is. If the infallible is he who does not commit any mistake, I see that out of the 12 Imams only two, Imam- Ali and for a short period Imam Hasan were able to assume Khilafat, and even they committed mistakes in the administration of the State. This is a point beyond any dispute from historical point of view. This position is not in consonance with the definition of the infallible. For example, we see that Imam Hasan detailed Ubaydullah ibn Abbas to conduct fighting against Mu'awiyah. Imam Ali himself appointed Abdullah ibn Abbas Governor of Basrah. It is certain that he would never have appointed him if he had known what disgrace he would bring about and how dirty his behaviour would be. This means that he did not know in advance the consequences of his action. He thought that he had selected the best man for the particular job, but Ibn Abbas proved contrary to his expectations. If we carry out further investigation into Imam Ali's period of government, we will come

across many more examples of this kind. From historical point of view such mistakes are all right, but they are not in keeping with this definition of infallibility. As I have said, any unilateral discussion all the participants of which subscribe to a particular ideology is not very useful. The reason is that when a man has a particular belief, he begins to love it and is not willing to listen to anything contrary to that belief. This principle applies especially to us, the Shi'ites in whose hearts love of Shi'ism and Imam Ali's house has been ingrained from childhood and who have never heard any criticism against them. We might have heard some criticism against our religion, its principles and even against monotheism and religiousness, but have never heard anybody criticizing Shi'ism, the Imams or the actions taken by them. That is why we feel very much perturbed if anybody raises any objection against, for example, Imam Hasan. To listen to anything against Imam Husayn is far more difficult.

His Eminence has laid stress on the verse that says: "Those who offer prayers and pay zakat while they are bowing (in prayers)." He has argued that this verse refers to none but to Imam Ali and that it was revealed in connection with his giving away his ring while bowing in prayers. In my opinion this argument is not very sound and logical because: We have heard and have read in Imam Ali's life account that while offering prayers he was so devoted to Allah that he was unable to recognize any individual. It is also said that while performing ablution he did not recognize anyone passing in front of him. Then how can it be expected of such a person that he would be so vigilant while offering prayers that he would pull out his ring and give it to a beggar who had appeared before him and to whom no body else had given anything. Further it is not a good thing to give money to a beggar. At least giving money to a beggar was not so important that for the sake of it one should impair one's prayers. Furthermore, zakat is not due on a ring. According to the verdict of the Shi'ah jurists a ring is not one of those things on which zakat is due. Besides that, some people who are biased in this respect, have with a view to magnify this incident, said that the ring was very costly, while we know that Imam Ali never wore a costly ring.

Answer: In respect of the question of infallibility very few individuals hold a different opinion. Anyhow, it is a useful practice to ask questions.

What is the meaning of infallibility? Sometimes man tends to think that Allah keeps a watch on certain selected people and does not allow them to commit a sin. Whenever they intend to commit it, He prevents them from carrying out their intention. Of course that is not infallibility and even if that be, it does not bring any credit to anybody. If somebody always keeps a watch on a child and does not allow him to do anything wrong, that cannot be considered to be a merit of the child. But there is another meaning of infallibility which can be deduced from the Qur'an. In the story of Prophet Yusuf whom a particular woman tried to seduce him, the Quran says: **"She verily desired him and he would have desired her if it had not been that he saw the argument of his Lord."** (Surah Yusuf, 12: 24).

Prophet Yusuf after all was a human being. He was young and had innate impulse. That woman advanced towards him but he did not advance towards her. If it had not been that he'

knew that he was being watched by Allah, he also would certainly have advanced. The perfect faith with which he was endowed by Allah prevented him from during a wrong thing and made him conscious of its harmful consequences.

Each one of us without the intervention of any outside force desists from committing many sins and lapses because we all are fully convinced of their dangerous consequences. For example it is a sin to fling oneself from the top of a four-storeyed building or throw oneself into a burning fire. We never commit such a sin, because we are fully conscious of the danger which it involves. We know to touch an electric live wire means instant death. We commit this sin only when we ignore its underlying danger. A child touches fire without hesitation, because he does not realize its danger as we the grown ups do. Piety becomes a trait of a righteous man's character and therefore he does not commit many sins at all. This trait of his character makes him infallible to a certain extent. Therefore infallibility depends on man's faith and his conviction. We have accepted certain acts to be sinful because they are prohibited by our religion. We say that as Islam has forbidden drinking wine, we do not drink it, and as Islam has forbidden gambling, we do not gamble. We more or less know that these things are bad. But the risk that these sins involve is not as clear to us as the risk involved in throwing ourselves into a burning fire. If we had been as much convinced of the harm of these sins as we are convinced of the harm of throwing ourselves into a fire, we would have been infallible as far as these sins were concerned. Therefore infallibility means perfect faith and conviction. He who has said: "Even if the curtain was lifted, my conviction would not increase" [39] , was certainly infallible, for while this side of the curtain, he could clearly see the other side of it. He could feel that if he used foul language against anyone he would be creating a scorpion for himself, and for that reason he would not talk abusively. The Quran itself mentions some examples of the faith of this degree. That is why it is said that infallibility is relative term and infallibility has several degrees and stages. Those who are infallible never commit those sins which we sometimes commit and sometimes avoid. They are impeccable. Still they have stages and degrees and all of them are not alike. In certain stages they are like us. As we are not immune from committing sins, they are also not immune from committing certain types of mistakes. They do not do anything which we regard as a sin, but they may do certain things which they themselves regard as sins although we may not regard them as such at all, for we have not reached that stage which they have. If a student of class V solves a question of class VI, it is creditable to him and he may get a reward for that, but if a student of IX class solves the same question, it does not bring him any credit. What is meritorious to us may be sinful to the infallible. As the proverb goes, one man's food is another man's poison.

That is why we find that in the Qur'an disobedience has been ascribed to some Prophets also. **"And Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray."** (Surah Taha, 20:121)

To the Holy Prophet Allah says: **"So that Allah may forgive you of your sin, that which is past and that which is to come."** (Surah al Fath 48:2)

These verses show that infallibility is a relative term. The Prophets and the Imams are infallible according to their capacity and we are according to our capacity. The very nature of infallibility protects one against sins. The scope of this protection depends on the degree of the perfection of one's faith. A man is as much near the stage of **"if it had not been that he saw the argument of his Lord"** as much his faith is perfect. Infallibility is automatic. It is not that an infallible person desires like us to commit a sin, but someone is sent by Allah to hold his hand and prevent him from carrying out his intention. Had that been the case, there would have been no difference between me and Imam Ali. Like me he also would have desired to commit sins.

At the most he would have been prevented from actually committing them by someone sent by Allah, whereas for me no such arrangement exists. If someone from outside prevents a man from committing a sin, that is not creditable to that man. Suppose someone committed theft, but I did not merely because I was always being escorted by a watchman. In this case I am as good a thief as that man is, with the difference that no watchman prevented him from committing the crime whereas a watchman prevented me. This can bring no credit to me.

The main ingredient of infallibility is the incapability of making a sin. The incapability of making a mistake is quite a different matter. Anyhow, we cannot say that the Holy Prophet might have made a mistake in conveying the commandments of Islam or might have conveyed anything contrary to what was revealed to him, as often happens in the case of ordinary messengers, who sometimes deliver a wrong message. In regard to the Holy Prophet it is not possible to say that in the delivery of his message he might have made a mistake.

As for other questions, the questioner has been hasty in drawing his conclusions. He has been unjust even to Imam Ali. If he were in Imam Ali's place, is he sure that he would not have selected Ubaydullah ibn Abbas? There is no harm if one draws a speculative conclusion in such historical matters. Anybody can easily say that he thinks that it would have been better if such and such person instead of doing that 500 years ago would have done this. If somebody asked him whether he was sure about that, he could say that it was his personal guess. But it is dangerous to come to a definite conclusion in such matters, not only in respect of Imam Ali but in respect of other individuals also. Imam Ali was aware of the situation as it prevailed. He knew Abdullah ibn Abbas and his other companions better than you and me. But still we say if he had selected someone else instead of Abdullah ibn Abbas, he would have done the job better. This is a hasty conclusion in this matter. Further you yourself have always stated that Imam Ali had a special policy of his own and he did not want to budge an inch from it. But he did not have any supporters of his policy.

He always said that he did not have any man. This Abdullah ibn Abbas and other often advised him to be flexible. They urged him to pursue that which was now-a-days called diplomacy. I ask you to prove to me that Imam Ali had enough men to choose from, but he made a mistake in his selection. I for one cannot prove that. All that I know is that the Holy

Prophet designated Imam Ali as his successor. Imam Ali himself complained that Khilafat had been snatched from him. When after Uthman people came to him to pledge their allegiance to him, he retracted and said: "Leave me alone and seek someone else, for we are facing a many-sided situation. The atmosphere is overcast and the route has changed beyond recognition." What Imam Ali meant was that the conditions were extremely bad and he lacked supporters and workers with whose help he might be able to improve the conditions and reform society. Then he said what amounted to saying: "Still I have no excuse. If I make an excuse, history will not accept it. People will say that Ali through his own negligence lost the opportunity. Though in fact it is not an opportunity. I accept your suggestion so that history may not blame me." Thus Imam Ali himself admitted that he did not have enough men, and the time was not opportune for his Caliphate.

One may doubt any thing, but even history does not doubt that Imam Ali believed that his claim to Khilafat was stronger than that of anybody else. Sunnis admit that Imam Ali considered himself to be a more legitimate candidate for Khilafat than Abu Bakr and Umar. Nevertheless when after Uthman people went to him and asked him to accept Khilafat, he declined and said that he would rather like to continue to be an adviser and guide than to become a ruler. From this it is clear that he did not have enough competent men around him. Why so? That is a different question.

As for the verse, They establish prayers and pay zakat while they are bowing, you say that zakat is not due on a ring In fact zakat includes every thing given for a good cause. Its modern use as a technical term for the obligatory zakat is the use of the jurists. In the Qur'an this word has not been used everywhere in this sense. Zakat means purification of property and money. This word is used in connection with spiritual purification also. The Qur'an has at different places described spending for the sake of Allah as Zakat of wealth, Zakat of soul, and Zakat of self. The same case is with the word, "Sadaqah" (charity alms). Today it has a special significance. For example we say 'secret sadaqah', but according to the Qur'an every good deed is called sadaqah. If you build a hospital or write a beneficial book, that will be a sadaqah jariyah (running charity) in the words of the Qur'an. That is why even the Sunnis who do not accept the conception deduced from this verse, have not objected to this word. They being conversant with Arabic literature know that zakat does not always mean obligatory Zakat only.

Now the question is how comes it that Imam Ali gave his ring while bowing in prayers. This is an objection which was raised by some early scholars like Fakhruddin Razi also. They say that Ali was always so absorbed in his prayers that he never paid any attention to what was going on around him. Then how could all this happen while he was offering prayers? In reply, it may be said that it is true that Imam Ali used to be fully absorbed in his prayers, but it is also a fact that the state of the Holy men is not always the same. It has been reported about the Holy Prophet that sometimes he was so violently carried away by a desire to offer prayers that he could not wait for the call to prayers by Bilal to be finished and asked him to make haste. On some other occasions while he was prostrating himself in prayers it often happened that

Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn or some other grandchild of his came to him and rode his shoulders, and he waited calmly until the child got down. Once while he was standing in prayers, he found that some spittle was lying in front of him, he took two steps forward, covered it with dust by his foot and then returned to his place. From this incident the jurists have deduced a number of rules concerning prayers.

Bahrul Ulum has said: "The most noble person walked while offering prayers. This incident solves many questions."

For example the jurists have on the basis of this incident decided what amount of action not relevant to prayers is permissible during prayers. A number of other rules also have been deduced.

All this shows that the Holy men have different spiritual states, and according to these states they behave differently on different occasions.

There is another point. The gnostics according to their taste say that when man reaches the most perfect spiritual state of being fully attracted towards Allah, he returns to this world. In other words in this state he attends to Allah as well as to the creation. That is what the gnostics say, and I agree to their view, although it may not be acceptable to many.

Another spiritual state is that of disincarnation or casting off the body. Those who reach this stage, in the beginning cast off their body for one or two seconds or at the most for an hour or so. But some individuals ultimately reach a stage at which they are in this state all the time. (I believe that and have personally observed it.) Sometimes it may happen that you see some individuals sitting with you like ordinary people, but actually they are in this state. According to these people the state in which an arrow was pulled out of Imam Ali's body while he was offering prayers without his being conscious of it was a lower state than that in which he attended to a beggar without being unconscious of Allah. He was so attentive to Allah that he could see the whole world. In the presence of all this evidence this incident cannot be denied.

[38] She is held in very high respect by the Shi'ah and is regarded as the most eminent wife of the Holy Prophet (SA) after Khadijah. She is greatly respected by the Sunnis also. According to them, she ranks next to Khadijah and 'Ayishah.

[39] Imam Ali (AS) is reported to have said so. (Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 2)

Imamat from the Viewpoint of the Imams

The general discussion of the question of Imamat is coming to an end with this discourse. A further discussion of this question will consist of the study of the Prophetic traditions relating to Imam Ali and other Imams and the sayings of the early Imams in respect of the subsequent Imams. All these traditions are of the nature of authoritative directive, in regard to the designation and appointment of the Imams.

Perhaps a number of points included in the present discourse have already been covered by the discussion already made, but as these points reflect the spirit of the question of Imamat, we propose to discuss them again with reference to the sayings of the Imams in this connection. We also propose to quote some extracts from al-Kafi, Book of Hujjah.

We have several times said that Imamat in the sense in which the Shi'ah or at least their Imams talk about it is different from the Imamat of which the Sunnis speak. The question of Imamat is also different from that of government, which is so often the subject of discussion nowadays. Basically the question of Imamat closely follows that of Prophethood, not in the sense that Imamat is something inferior to Prophethood, but in the sense that it resembles Prophethood. The great Prophets were both Prophets and Imams at one and the same time. Imamat is a spiritual state. In this connection the Imam

have laid stress on the concept of man. Let us review our concept of him so that this point may become clear.

What Kind of a Being is Man?

Do you know what kind of a being basically man is? There are two points of view. According to one of them man, like all other living beings, is a 100% material being, which as a result of a series of material changes has developed to the utmost possible to which degree a material being could develop. Life whether in plants, animals or men is a manifestation of the gradual development of the matter without the interference of any non-material element in their existence. (We have used the word element only for want of any better expression.) Every wonderful quality existing in any being emanates from its material structure. On this basis the first man or the first man who appeared in this world must have been the most primitive men. It is with the passage of time that man has gradually developed. That is true whether we

consider man to have been created direct from clay according to the ancient conception, or to have developed from lower animal kingdom on the basis of natural selection according to the theory put forward by some modern gentlemen whose idea is also worth consideration at least as a theory, according to this theory also man has his ultimate roots in the earth although according to it the first man was not created direct from clay.

First Man In the Quran

Not only according to the Islamic and Qur'anic belief, but according to all religions, the first man was not only more developed that all the subsequent men; but was more developed than even the modern man. From the moment he stepped his foot in the world the first man was the vicegerent of Allah as well as His Prophet. It is a point worth consideration why the first man who appeared, appeared as a Divinely appointed authority and Prophet, while it seems more natural according to the evolutionary process that first ordinary men should appear and after they have attained a fairly high degree of development, one of them be appointed a Prophet.

According to the Qur'an the first man held a very high position: When your Lord said to the angels: "**Surely I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said: Will you place therein one who will do harm in it, and will shed blood, while we hymn Your praise and sanctify You? He said: Surely I know that which you know not. And He taught Adam all the names, and then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these if you are truthful.**" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30-31)

In short the first man who came into being caused surprise to the angels. What is the secret of this? In respect of the first man the expression, **I breathed in him of My spirit** (Surah al-Hijr, 15:29) has been used. This shows that the structure of this being had in it a higher element besides the material elements and it is this higher element which has been described by the above expression. In other words in the structure of this being something very special was put by Allah, who made him His vicegerent: **"I am about to place a vicegerent (My vicegerent) in the earth."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30)

Thus the Qur'an gives the impression that the first man who stepped his foot on the earth did so as a Divine authority, a Prophet and a being having contact with the unseen world. Our Imams have laid stress on this origin of man in order to establish that the last man on the face of the earth would also be holding the same dignified position as the first man. Actually the world of humanity can never be devoid of a being possessing the spirit of I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth. The existence of all other men depends on his existence. If such a man does not exist, others also cannot exist. Such a man is called 'Divine authority'. By Allah, the world cannot be devoid of an authoritative master appointed by Allah . This sentence has been extracted from the sayings of Nahjul Balaghah and quoted in many books. I have heard the late Ayatullah Burujardi citing it, said that it was a sentence which Imam Ali pronounced while in Basra and that it was regularly reproduced both by the Shi'ah and the Sunnis. This

sentence is the concluding part of a tradition reported by Kumayl. He says that one day Imam Ali caught hold of his hand and took him out of the city. When they reached a secluded place known as Jabbin, Imam Ali heaved a deep sigh and said: "Kumayl, the hearts are receptacles. The most retentive of them are the best. Therefore remember what I tell you. The men are of three types: a Divine scholar, a pupil seeking salvation and a buzzing fly". (See Nahjul Balagha, Saying 146). According to Imam Ali's terminology a divine scholar is not an ordinary scholar, although we often apply this term indiscriminately. He means a scholar 100 per cent devoted to Allah. In this sense perhaps this term can apply only to the Prophets and the Imams. The second group is that of the pupils who receive knowledge from the first group. The third group is of those "who have not sought the light of knowledge and have not resorted to a strong support." After saying this Imam Ali complained of the people of his time. He said that he had great amount of knowledge to impart, but he did not find any one fit to receive it. He added that there were some people intelligent enough, but they wanted to use what they learnt to gain their selfish ends and to exploit religion for their worldly gains. Therefore he had to withhold knowledge from them. There were others who were good people, but they were fools. They did not understand or understood wrongly. From what Imam Ali said so far it appeared that he was totally disappointed. But that was not the case. He was talking of the majority only, for he added: "No, not indeed: The earth is never without a divine authority, whether visible and known or hidden and unseen. The existence of such an authority is necessary so that Allah's proofs and arguments may not become invalid. But how many and where are such people? Indeed very few, but very dear to Allah. It is through them that Allah preserves His proofs and arguments. They pass on their knowledge to their likes and cultivate it in the hearts of their counterparts."

Speaking further about these individuals who receive their knowledge from Divine source, Imam Ali said: "Knowledge rushes to them giving them insight into the truth." In other words their knowledge is intuitive, not acquired, and is free from every error and mistake. "They are endowed direct with the spirit of conviction", for they are in direct touch with the unseen world. "What is difficult for those who are accustomed to luxurious living, is easy to them. "The most difficult thing for those who live in ease and luxury is to devote themselves to Allah." "They are familiar with that to which the ignorant are averse. They live in the world while their souls are attached to the highest place." Their bodies are with the people in this world, but their souls are somewhere else. The people find them among themselves, but do not know that their souls are attached to some elevated place."

That is the logic of Imamat. That is the reason why there is a chapter in al-Kafi entitled, Babul Hujjah. Reports in this chapter say that even if only two persons were left in the world, one of them would be a hujjah or Divinely appointed authority. I propose to quote some extracts from the Babul Hujjah of al-Kafi so that you may become better acquainted with this logic. All other questions such as that the people must have an Imam so that he may dispense justice to them or so that he may resolve the controversies about religious matters, are subsidiary questions. An Imam is not required to administer the government and hence he is not to be chosen by the people. He is above all such things. The administration of government may be

called a side business of him. Now we put forward selected words of various traditions so that the logic of Imamat may become clear.

A report from Imam Sadiq: This is a report relating to the Prophets. It is said that a zindiq (a free thinker or an atheist)[40] asked Imam Sadiq how he could prove the existence of the Prophets and the Divine Messengers. The Imam basing his reply on the doctrine of monotheism, said:

"We know for certain that we have a Creator, who is far above us and above all that He has created. That Creator is wise and sublime, but we cannot have direct contact with Him. It is not possible for His creation to see Him, to touch Him or to argue with Him. But we need His guidance, for He alone knows what is in our interest and what is beneficial to us. Therefore there must be some messengers of Him to convey His message to His creation and His slaves and to tell them what is to their advantage and what is detrimental to them. This proves that there are some admonishers appointed by Allah, the Wise, the All-knowing."

About these admonishers (Prophets and Imams) Imam Sadiq says: "They are wise men, wisely trained and sent with a wise message. They have been created exactly like other people, but still they are different from them." They have an additional dimension and an additional spirit. "They enjoy the support of the All-wise and All-knowing who has granted them wisdom. The existence of such a person is essential in every age and every period of time, so that the world may not be devoid of a master (hujjah) having signs showing his veracity and irreprochability."

Zayd ibn Ali and Imamat

Imam Muhammad Baqir's brother, Zayd ibn Ali was a pious and virtuous man. Our Imams have sanctified him and his uprising. But it is a controversial point whether he claimed Khilafat for himself or sought it for his brother, and his campaign aimed at only 'enjoining good and forbidding evil'. However, it is certain that our Imams have venerated him and have described him as a martyr. A report in al-Kafi says: "By Allah! He passed away as a martyr." Another report which we are going to reproduce now shows that he was mistaken. It is a different matter how such a great man made such a grave mistake.

One of the companions of Imam Muhammad Baqir is known as Abu Ja'far Ahwal. He says that while Zayd ibn Ali was under-ground, one day he sent for me and said to me: "If anyone of us rises against the present government will you be prepared to cooperate?" I said: "Yes, provided your father and the brother agree." "I intend to rise myself and have nothing to do with my brother", said he. "In that case I will not cooperate", said I. He said: "Why? Are you not willing to sacrifice your life for me?" I said: "I have one life only. If in this world there was a master (hujjah), appointed by Allah, then he who stayed away, would be safe, and he

who went out with you, would perish. If there was no master appointed by Allah, then he who stayed away and he who went out with you were alike."

[Hence it was immaterial whether I did or did not join you in your uprising].

Abu Ja'far Ahwal knew what Zayd meant. According to this tradition Ahwal told him that there was a master or a hujjah existing in the world and that hujjah was Zayd's brother, not Zayd himself. In reply Zayd said what amounted to saying: "How do you know (that my brother is the hujjah) while I do not know? My father loved me very much, but he never told me anything about that. He was so fond of me that in my childhood while taking food, he always seated me beside him. Whenever he found that any food was too hot for me, he always cooled it and then put it into my mouth. How can you expect a loving father, who was so affectionate and never allowed my mouth to burn, that he would ever allow me to be burnt in Hell?" Abu Ja'far Ahwal said: "It was because your father was very fond of you that he did not tell you anything about this question. He was afraid that if he told you, you would deny it and thus earn Hell. He was aware of your impertinent spirit. He intentionally kept you in the dark so that at least you might not become hostile to your brother. But he told me the truth so that if I accepted it, I might be saved and if not, I shall be doomed. Fortunately I have accepted the truth".

Abu Ja'far Ahwal says that he asked Zayd who was superior, the members of his family or the Prophets. Zayd replied that the Prophets were. Then Abu Ja'far said: "Prophet Ya'qub said to his son Yousuf who was also a Prophet: **'My dear son, tell not your brothers of your vision, lest they plot a plot against you.'** Prophet Ya'qub gave this advice because he loved Yousuf, and he knew that if his brothers came to know that he would attain such a high position, they would immediately become his enemies. The story of your father and brother with you is exactly like the story of Ya'qub with Yousuf and his brothers."

Zayd had no reply to give. At last he said: "Now that you have told me all this, I also may tell you that your friend in Medina (He meant 'your Imam', that is Imam Muhammad Baqir) has apprised me that I would be killed and crucified at the garbage dump of Kufa and that he had a book, in which there was a prediction about my being killed and crucified."

Here Zayd, so to say, turned a new leaf. He advanced an entirely new argument. Anyhow, what he said, supported the view that he believed in the Imamat of his brother. First he said something to Abu Ja'far and continued to talk in the same vein. But when he saw that Abu Ja'far firmly believed in Imamat, he changed the trend of his talk and made clear that he was not unmindful of the true position. He implied that he was launching his struggle with the knowledge and approval of his brother. Abu Ja'far adds that one year he went to Makkah. There he related this story to Imam Ja'far Sadiq, who confirmed his view.

According to another tradition Imam Ja'far Sadiq said: "In the world there will always be an

Imam." He is also reported to have said: "If only two persons were left, one of them would be the master (hujjah) of the other."

A report from Imam Riza: In this connection we have a large number of traditions. There is a detailed report which is connected with Imam Riza. A man named Abdul Aziz ibn Muslim says: "We were in Marv with Imam Riza when he went to Khurasan while he was still a heir apparent. Once on Friday we were in the Jami' Mosque. The Imam was not present there. In the mosque there were people in a large number and they were discussing the question of Imamat. After the prayers I went to Imam Riza and told him what had transpired there. The Imam sarcastically smiled and said: "These people are ignorant and have deceptive opinions. Allah carried away His Prophet only after He had completed his mission. Allah has revealed the Holy Qur'an which contains all the rules of law and all that is permissible or forbidden. In the Holy Qur'an there is every thing that the people need in connection with their religion. The Holy Quran itself says: **"We have not neglected anything in this Book."** (Surah al-An'am, 6:38)

In other words, nothing is missing in it. (At least all the rules of law have been described in it).

On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage towards the end of his life the Holy Prophet recited this verse: **"This day I have completed your religion and have perfected My favour on you and chose Islam as a religion for you."** (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:3) Imam Riza continued: "The religion cannot be complete without the doctrine of Imamat. The Holy Prophet departed this world only after he had explained to his ummah (followers) all the main points of their religion, showed them the right way and set up Imam Ali as a conspicuous sign and a rallying point.

In short the Quran expressly says that it has not left out anything unsaid. But has it not left out the details and the minor points? Actually it has dealt only with the principal points and the general rules required by the people. One of the main issues dealt with by the Qur'an is the question of Imamat.

The Qur'an indicates that the Holy Prophet was to be succeeded by a man who knew the interpretation of the Quran and its true meaning based not on any independent judgement or individual deduction, which might sometimes be right and sometimes be wrong, but based on his Divine knowledge of the true nature of Islam. Allah says that He has mentioned in the Qur'an everything. Even the details were not totally ignored, but were left with him who knew Islam thoroughly. A man knowing Islam thoroughly has always existed and will always be existing among the people. "If any one thinks that Allah has not completed His religion, he refutes the Book of Allah. And anyone who refutes the Book of Allah is an infidel. "Do those who maintain that an Imam can be appointed by the choice of the people, know the value of Imamat and its position in the Ummah?

They think that the selection of an Imam is just like the selection of a commander of the army, while Imam means the person with whose designation, according to the Qur'an, religion has been completed. We know that the Quran does not deal with the minor issues. The knowledge of them has been imparted to the Imam, whose knowledge of Islam is very thorough. People cannot say who is such a person. That is why they cannot elect him, as they cannot elect a Prophet.

"Imamat is too valuable, too sublime, too lofty, too impregnable and too deep for the people to perceive it with their mind or to get to it through their own thinking."

Imamat is above the comprehension of the people. Hence it cannot be decided by election. Only that question can be called elective which can be determined by the people. Religion does not interfere with such a question direct, and basically it should not, because if it does, then what is the use of reason and intellect? Within the range of human thinking man himself is to decide, but beyond that there is no question of human choice. "Imamat is too valuable, too sublime, too lofty, too impregnable and too deep for people to know their Imam or to select him on their own. Allah first chose Ibrahim as His Prophet and friend and only then conferred Imamat on him."

If you want to know the real meaning of Imamat, then you must understand that Imamat is different from what our people nowadays say. It is not the election of a successor to the Holy Prophet for the administration of public affairs only. Imamat is a position that was attained by Prophet Ibrahim after he had been a Prophet. On attaining it he felt so happy that he said: **"And of my offspring"** (Will there be any Imam)? He wanted some of his offspring also to attain the position he had attained. The reply was: **"My covenant included not the wrongdoers."** We have already explained what this reply means. Does Allah refer only to those who are wrongdoers at the time of the grant of Imamat irrespective of the fact whether previously they had been the wrongdoers or not? It is evident that Prophet Ibrahim could not possibly have asked Allah to grant Imamat to the wrongdoers. Obviously he had in mind only those of his offspring who were good. Therefore this reply meant that Imamat would be granted only to those whose past record was also unblemished.

Imam Riza further said: "This verse has nullified the possibility of Imamat being conferred on any wrongdoer till the Day of Resurrection and has confined Imamat to the cream among the posterity of Prophet Ibrahim. Allah has honoured him by placing Imamat in those of his posterity who were the chosen and pure." It means those who were infallible. After saying that, Imam Riza quoted these verses of the Qur'an and based his argument on them: **"And we bestowed on him Ishaq, and Yaqub as a grandson. Each of them we made righteous And we made them Imams who guide by our Command and we inspired in them the doing of good deeds."** (Surah al-Ambiya, 21:72-73)

The Qur'an stresses the fact that Imamat will for ever continue in the posterity of Prophet

Ibrahim. The renowned Islamic scholar Muhammad Taqi Shari'ati has in his book, Khilafat and Wilayat elaborately discussed the question why the Quran which does not believe in ethnic discrimination, has said so. From ethnic point of view posterity is a technical term. How did Prophet Ibrahim's posterity exclusively acquire the capability of holding Imamat is a different question.

Imam Riza added: "How can these ignorant people elect an Imam?". Prophet Ibrahim attained Imamat only after he had attained Prophethood. How can these ignorant people elect any body for such a high position? Can such an assignment be elective? "Imamat is a grade of the Prophets and heritage of the legatees." It is something traditional in the sense that the competence to get it is transferred from generation to generation, but still it is not strictly hereditary. "Imamat is vicegerency of Allah and Caliphate of the Holy Prophet." It is the same vicegerency which Adam was the first to hold. "Imamat regulates the religion." It is an organization of the Muslims and a system of their life. Their prosperity and honour depend on it. It is the basis of Islam and the highest department of it. "The accomplishment of Prayers, Zakat, Fasting, Hajj and Jihad etc. is linked with the existence of an Imam."

Conclusion:

All this leads us to a logical course of thinking. If we accept it, it has a basis. If somebody rejects it by chance, that is a different matter. This logical course is different from the pursuit of superficial and ordinary questions discussed by the majority of the scholastic theologians. For example, they say that Abu Bakr succeeded the Holy Prophet as the first Caliph, while Ali was the fourth. Now the theologians discuss the point whether Ali should have been the first Caliph or, for example, the fourth, and whether Abu Bakr fulfilled the conditions necessary for Imamat. They then discuss the qualification which an Imam, in the sense of a head of the Muslim State must possess. No doubt this question is also of basic importance, and from this point of view the Shi'ah have in this connection raised some objections and quite valid too, but on principle it is not proper to confuse the issue of Imamat with the question whether Abu Bakr did or did not possess the qualifications necessary for being an Imam. As a matter of fact the Sunnis do not believe in Imamat in that sense in which the Shi'ah do. In short, the Sunnis hold that the metaphysical aspects of man mentioned by Allah in connection with Adam, Ibrahim and others up to the Holy Prophet, have come to an end. Now all men are ordinary human beings. At the most there are scholars who have acquired knowledge. They sometimes make a mistake and sometimes do not. Similarly there are rulers. Some of them are irreproachable, whereas some others are wicked. That is the end of the question. The Sunnis do not believe, as we do, in the 'Divine masters' (hujjah) having contact with the metaphysical world, for they think that with the demise of the Holy Prophet all this has terminated.

The Shi'ah say that there is no doubt that with the Holy Prophet the Prophethood has come to an end. Now no Prophet will come and no new religion will be brought by any human being. There is only one religion and that is Islam. The Prophet of Islam is the last Prophet. But the

question of the hujjah and perfect man has not come to an end at all. As the first man was of this category, the last man must also be like him. Among the Sunnis only the sufis believe in this doctrine, though they also give it a different name. That is why we see that some sufis despite their being Sunnis accept the doctrine of Imamat in some of their writings in the same sense in which the Shi'ah do. Muhyuddin ibn Arabi is an Andalusian. Andalus (Spain) was one of those countries, the inhabitants of which were not only Sunnis but were also fanatically anti-Shi'ah, having a smack of Nasibiism in them. The reason was that Andalus was originally conquered by the Umayyads who ruled over it for a long time. The Umayyads, bore malice against the Holy Prophet's household. Perhaps in Andalus there were not any Shiites and if there were, their number was as very small. Muhyuddin is an Andalusian, but on account of his gnostic taste he believes that the earth can never be devoid of a Wali and hujjah. He accepts the Shi'ah point of view in this connection and recounts the names of the Imams. While mentioning the last Imam, he goes so far as to claim that he personally met Muhammad ibn Hasan 'Askari at such and such place a few years after 600 A.H. But despite all this he has made many statements against Shiah doctrines, and is basically a biased Sunni, but because of his gnostic inclination he admits that it is not possible that at any time there be no Wali (or hujjah as our Imams say) on the earth. He even claims: "I had an audience with Muhammad ibn Hasan Askari, who is now in occultation and whose age at present is more than 300 years."

Questions and Answers

Question: As you have said, it is true that the main subject of dispute between the Shi'ah and the Sunnis is the question of Khilafat and Wilayat. Unfortunately most Shi'ah who are not aware of the true nature of Imamat ask how it comes that the Qur'an mentions the word Wilayat only and the word Khilafat is not found in it, while Khilafat is different from Wilayat. That was the reason why I was keen to ascertain if the word 'Mawla' has been translated as Khalifah also. The other day I found that the well-known dictionary, al-Munjid has given 'Khalifa 'as one of the meanings of Mawla. As such in my opinion the question now stands resolved. In this connection I would like to know what the correct word is, Khalifah or Khalif. Of course the Quran has used the word Khalifah.

Answer: It is not correct. In the Quran the word Khalifah has not been used in the sense in which we normally use it, though in the Shi'ah tradition this word has been frequently used in this sense. Anyhow the use of a particular word is not very important.

The significance of the Khalifah in the construction Khalifatullah (vicegerent of Allah) is quite different from its significance in the construction Khalifatur Rasul (successor to the Holy Prophet). We must not lay unnecessary stress on whether or not this word has been used in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. What is important is the sense of the word, not the word itself.

You have said that Khalif is one of the meanings of Mawla. That is not true. I think you have been mistaken. In al-Munjid the word is Halif, not Khalif. Halif means an ally or a supporter.

Among the Arabs two or more individuals or tribes used to take oath to help each other. They were called Hulafa and each of them was called Halif of the others. As such if the word Mawla is used in the sense of Halif, it still means a helper and a supporter.

[40] At that time the word, 'zindiq' was not an abusive term as it is now. In those days a number of people were called zindiqs and they did not think it insulting to be called so. In our times the same is the case with the word, materialist. Of course a monotheist would never like to be called so, but he who is a materialist, may even be proud of this appellation. As regards the origin of the word, zindiq, there are various theories. Mostly it is believed that the zindiqs were Manichieans who appeared in the beginning of the second century, that is the century in which Imam Sadiq lived. Many westerners and other scholars have discussed the question of the zindiqs in Islam. They have come to the conclusion that the zindiqs were the followers of Mani. It may be remembered that Mani's creed was not anti-God. Mini himself claimed to be a Prophet. Anyhow, he was a dualist, not a monotheist, and for that matter, more dualist than Zoroaster, for some people believe that Zoroaster was possibly a monotheist, who at least believed in one eternal source of the whole universe, though it cannot be proved from his writings that he believed in one Creator. In contrast, Mani was definitely a dualist and claimed to be a Prophet raised by the god of good. But later Manichiaean tended towards materialism and naturalism, and ceased to believe in anything spiritual.

Notes on Leadership and Management

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1. If we want to find out the Islamic equivalents of the technical terms, leadership and management in their modern expanded sense, we should say irshad (direction) and rushd (maturity), or hidayat (guidance) and rushd. According to Islamic terminology the capability of leadership is called hidayat and irshad, and the capability of management is the same as what is called rushd in Islamic jurisprudence.

In ordinary use and day to day Persian parlance 'rushd' is a physical quality relating to body and stature, but as a term of Islamic jurisprudence it is a quality related to mental development. It means maturity of understanding as distinguished from physical maturity. When a child has attained this maturity, his property is handed over to him. The jurists (Fuqaha) say that physical maturity is not enough for contracting a marriage. Mental maturity is also required for this purpose. In this sense rushd means possessing discrimination and common sense and having the capacity of utilizing and taking care of the means of life.

2. The second point is that the guidance of man has two aspects, one stable and the other changing. While discussing Islam and the requirements of time we have said that human life has some stable aspects fitting in a stable framework. These aspects are represented by moral principles and inviolable Islamic laws. In other words human life has a fixed orbit as well as changing stages. The guidance and leadership of the Prophets fall within a fixed orbit, but human guidance and leadership operate within the range of specific questions and changeable details. For example the Holy Qur'an gives instructions about Jihad. It lays down against what people and under what circumstances holy war is to be waged, and under what conditions peace is to be concluded. This type of directions and guidance are given by the Prophets. But at what time, under whose command and with what equipment the army is to march, are the questions of detail. They are related to the movement within a fixed orbit.

3. We have said that the word, 'Wali' is synonymous with leader. It is possible that somebody says that 'Hidayat' means guidance, not leadership. Guidance has an instructional and propagative aspect, whereas leadership implies the sense of mobilization and giving a forward motion along a certain path. The conception of leadership covers such acts as those of formulating the ideas, mobilizing the forces, organizing the individuals and launching a movement.

Our reply is that it is correct that the word 'Hidayat' signifies guidance but it is used in the

sense of leadership also. Not only that, but it is used to convey the sense of leading to the desired goal too. Perhaps the words, Siyadat, Qiyadat and Imamat convey the sense of leadership better.

4. There is one more question. It is the question of the need of leadership and a leader. This pivotal point is the basis of the Prophets' teachings. In the Shi'ah creed the question of Imamat is based on the permanent need of the existence of an infallible and impeccable person.

5. Another question is that of the conditions, means and principles of leadership.

6. One more question is that of the objectives of leadership.

7. Another question is that of the types of leadership.

8. "Thorough knowledge of human physiognomy is essential for a leader, and for that matter for any man who works with other people on any level, whether in the house, in the school, in the factory or in any other organization". (Preface to Leadership, p. 25)

9. We have cited a well-known tradition regarding travelling. The Holy Prophet has said that if two (or three) persons travel together, they should choose one of them as their chief and the manager. This tradition shows how much importance Islam attaches to leadership and to discipline.

10. Relationship between leadership on the one hand and organization and discipline on the other.

11. Leadership is an art that can be learnt like any other arts.

12. "Human behaviour has its own laws or mechanism. Every action produces a corresponding reaction. If we want to work smoothly with other people, we must know the laws and the mechanism that govern their behaviour. Men are like a mystery box, to open which a special key is required. Their cooperation can be secured by means of knowledge and graceful manners, not by force. The laws of human behaviour are not to be formulated. They are to be discovered like the laws of physics, chemistry and physiology. The rules and regulations made to guide human conduct will be received well only if they are in consonance with the laws of human nature and human behaviour". (Preface to Leadership, p. 25)

The same book quotes a high official of the secretariat as having said: "Our office equipment has been modernized, but unfortunately our men are worn out."

13. Ref: No. 4 & 11: "Nowadays the need of leadership is discussed under the general heading of management. Industrial management, commercial management, technical

management and administrative management are all probably classified as administrative sciences. Our age is the age of administration and management". (Preface to Leadership, p. 35)

14. "Do not cross this stage unaccompanied by a Khizr (true guide). It is a dark place; beware of going astray."

15. "He will perish who does not have a wise man to guide him and a foolish man to support him."

16. The famous Persian poet, Hafiz says: "Try to learn if you do not know. Unless you walk yourself, how will you be able to lead others?"

17. Describing the qualifications required for a leader, Plato says that the kings must be philosophers. The eminence of a philosopher must be combined with the grandeur of a king.

18. Conditions and Means of Leadership

"A leader must be able to play a creative role in:

(i) Organizing divergent human forces,

(ii) And utilizing them for achieving the desired objectives, both individual and collective." (Preface to Leadership, p. 45)

19. The following Qur'anic verse explicitly shows the active and reformative leadership of the Holy Prophet of Islam:

"It was by the Mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them, for if you had been stern and fierce of heart, they would have dispersed from you. So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when you are resolved, then put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who put their trust in Him." (Surah Ale Imran, 3:159)

20. The incident of Abu Lubabah and his repentance and the incident of the three persons who lagged behind at the time of the Battle of Tabuk, and were subsequently excommunicated by the order of the Holy Prophet. They were left isolated and so took shelter in the hills. **"And to the three also (did He turn in mercy) who were left behind, when the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for them, and their own souls were straitened for them, till they bethought them that there is not refuge from Allah save towards Him."** (Surah at-Taubah, 9:118)

The incidents of Sa'd ibn Rabi', Abuzar and Abdullah ibn Jumu' are unique examples of securing general cooperation and carrying out public affairs and relationship.

21. One of the requirements of a leader is his possessing of cooperative spirit and his practical participation in general effort. Initiative is all the more necessary. Example is more important than precept.

22. Relating to the importance of the right action at the right time, 'Preface To Leadership' says: "'nine factor plays the basic role in leadership. Time-consciousness is an essential quality of a successful leadership."

23. The Holy Prophet was the bearer of the Divine Message and the leader of Divine movement. Imam Husayn son of Imam Ali was the leader of a revolutionary uprising in Islam. The Holy Prophet undertook the task of awakening a slumbering society and Imam Husayn rose to bring back a straying society to the right path. Both of them displayed high qualities of leadership. The Holy Prophet was a leader having a mission, a message and an ideology. He organized the necessary forces and mobilized them. He conveyed the Divine Message to the people of the world and shattered their ideological and social shackles. Imam Husayn led a Holy revolution against ostentation, hypocrisy and falsehood, and guided a reformatory uprising in order to enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong.

With reference to No. 22 - Ali and time-consciousness -- In reply to Abu Sufyan Imam Ali said: "Successful is he who either rose up with a wing or resigned and relaxed. This water is polluted. It is a morsel which chokes its eater. The one who plucks the fruit before it is ripe is like the man who sows in the land which does not belong to him." (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 5)

25. Self-confidence is one of the essential qualities of a leader. In other words a leader must have faith in his success. The Holy Prophet in the early days of his apostleship used to talk of the forthcoming submission of the Romans and the Iranians. At that time the Quraysh and the Bani Hashim ridiculed him. **"The messenger believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:285) What had been revealed included this verse: **"He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may cause it to prevail over all religion."** (Surah al-Fath, 48:28)

Imam Husayn was fully confident of the result of his uprising. He said to Abu Hirrah or someone else that his opponents would kill him, but afterwards they would be disgraced and would bring shame on themselves. On the day of Ashura (10th Muharram) he told his companions that they had only that much time left to them as a rider takes in riding his horse and getting off it. He also said to his family members:

"Note that only Allah is your protector and saviour."

26. For the essential qualities of a leader refer to the notes[41] on the qualities of a reformer, especially to Imam Ali's saying:

"Nobody can establish Allah's command except he who does not compromise on principles, is not a specimen of depravity and is not greedy." (See Nahjul Balagha - Saying 109)

A number of positive and negative qualities of a leader have been mentioned in 'Preface to Leadership', p. 66. The positive qualities include correct and quick appraisal of the situation, being firm and quick in decision, bold and quick action, visualization of precautionary measures in case of failure, preparedness to face criticism, tolerance of opposite views, courage of taking responsibility and accepting the consequences in case of failure, fair distribution of human labour, handing over authority commensurate with ability, organization, eagerness to obtain the latest information relevant to his functions, leniency mixed with sternness, dignity accompanied with simplicity, encouragement of the subordinates and the promotion of their capabilities, attention to the emotional problems of the individuals and the feeling of delight at their success. [Some of these items are the duties of a good leader, not his essential qualities].

The negative qualities of a reformer are lack of self-confidence, faltering decisions, fear of the possible consequences, getting perplexed when faced with an unexpected development, intolerance of criticism and of the views contrary to his own, impatience for achieving results, having a complex of leadership, demanding blind obedience from every body, self-praise, unsociability, abstaining from studies and acquiring information, getting depressed at the success of others and indifference to the human and emotional needs of the people.

He who lacks the above mentioned positive qualities cannot organize and mobilize the unfolded, but marvellous human forces for constructive purposes. Before everything else a man aspiring to become a leader should evaluate his positive and negative qualities.

Style of Leadership

27. The style of leadership may be despotic, dictatorial or 100 per cent individualistic. It may also be consultative, cooperative and based on common thinking.

Naturally ordinary people having individualistic and despotic tendencies dictate their laws and policies to their followers and do not care for the opinion of others. They encourage their followers and chide them in accordance with their own decisions and personal feelings. In the words of "The Preface to Leadership" such people are self-appointed leaders.

A consultative leadership always discovers the necessary solutions to the problems coming before it out of the suggestions advanced by its followers. Such a leadership, according to the

same book is a popular and democratic leadership.

Besides, a leader who consults his followers and gives due importance to their suggestions, accords a personality to his followers, encourages them to follow him willingly and secures their whole-hearted cooperation.

"The style of a leader is different from his objectives. It is possible that the objectives of a leader may be noble, but his style of leadership be despotic and objectionable. It is also possible that his objectives may be objectionable, but the method adopted by him to implement them be democratic." (p. 80)

28. There is another useful and interesting discussion in 'The Preface on Leadership'. "Some leaders pay exclusive attention to their objective and almost pay no attention to their followers. The policy of some other leaders is entirely contrary to that. The first group thinks of the desired results only and

pays no attention to the individual wishes, emotional longings and special aspirations of its followers. Not only that but occasionally treats them sternly. The second group regards the winning of the hearts of its followers more important than anything else and just to please them often deviates from its basic goal in the middle of the way.

To keep a balance between these two tendencies is one of the most basic duties of a good leader and his success depends on his finding a solution to this problem."(p. 81)

29. Under the heading "Prosperity -A Common Desire Of All Men", this book makes an improper interpretation of the root-cause of the success of the great leaders. It says: "All men usually keep waiting for a better day and a more opportune time when they may secure every thing to their heart's liking and may find no trace of oppression and tyranny, corruption and poverty, grief and disease. After all what are all the uprisings, revolts, yearnings, hopes, vexations, excitements, waiting and suffering for? Are they not for a better day, a more prosperous time and a more dignified future?" (p. 86)

The writer does not explain what he means by a better day. Does he mean a day when better and more profuse means of living would be available or does he believe that man has a higher ideal also in the depth of his soul, for the achievement of which he is always consciously or unconsciously striving? Or is it that he does not go beyond the limits of bread and butter?

Discussing the impulse that induces man to look for a leader and a saviour, to admire the leader and the saviour and to indulge in hero-worship, the author says: "What usually induces man to look for a leader, is his desire to obtain prosperity. For this purpose man makes every effort to find the best possible leader, and when he thinks that he has found one, he does all that he can to praise him and applaud him.

The author believes that hero-worship results from man's desire to find a saviour. In his opinion man lauds a hero as a means of getting better livelihood. But this is a very debatable point. Hero-worship is different from admiring a hero. A hero-worshipper is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the hero whom he worships. He does not merely like him as a means of his own prosperity. The cause of the author's mistake is that he has not paid due attention to the sense of worship or has not attached enough importance to it.

30. The Qur'an says: **"And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with His Commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: Surely I have appointed you an Imam for mankind. Ibrahim said: 'And of my offspring' (will there be Imams)? He said: 'My covenant includes not the wrongdoers."** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124) This verse indicates the importance of leadership and man-management. Prophet Ibrahim had to pass through many trials because of his faith. He was thrown into a burning fire; he had to fight a whole nation single-handedly; he broke the idols and he went to the extent that he was about to slaughter his own son. After he had passed through all these trials successfully, Allah called him an Imam and a leader. From this an idea of the extraordinary importance of leadership can be easily gathered. There is a tradition which says: "Allah appointed Ibrahim a Prophet before He appointed him His Messenger; He appointed him His Messenger before He appointed him His Friend; and He appointed him His Friend before He appointed him an Imam."

There is a well-known tradition according to which the Holy Prophet said: "If more than two persons travel together, let them elect one of them as their leader." This tradition shows the importance which Islam attaches to organization, management and leadership.

It is a fact that to mobilize the dormant human forces and leading men along the path of perfection are the most noble and the most difficult tasks both from the viewpoint of this worldly social life and from the viewpoint of moral and spiritual life. That is why no one is worthy of an all round and perfect leadership but such men as Prophet Ibrahim, the last Holy Prophet of Islam and Imam Ali (Peace be on them).

31. We have said that maturity means capability of utilizing and managing the assets and the means of life and looking after them. Now we say that the most important of all assets are human assets and the most important and the most basic type of maturity is one's capability of correctly exploiting and looking after one's own personal and moral resources. That is why we see that when Ibrahim asked Allah to appoint some of his descendants also Imams and leaders, he was told: **"My covenant does not include the wrongdoers"** (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124). In other words, those who lack individual and personal maturity, that is those who lack human and moral maturity cannot become the leaders of others. He who is not himself a man, cannot be a man-maker, man-engineer and a cultivator of men. (Like plants putting forth their shoots).

Organization of human resources, their exploitation and utilization, their motivation and

mobilization means breaking off man's moral and spiritual shackles: **"He will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:157). It is this maturity that is called today management or leadership.

In respect of individual maturity it must be made clear that man's mental and intellectual faculties are one of his assets. They require good management for being utilized well. For example there is a faculty of memory. How should it be utilized? Some people think that it is enough to have a good and strong memory. Others think that as their memory is weak, it is no use doing any intellectual work. They do not think that memory also requires management and training. It needs a special method to promote it. If it is supposed that memory was like an unorganized store, it would not be of much use. But if man guides his memory and uses it methodically, it will be like a well-managed library in which books have been arranged systematically in the racks and shelves according to their subjects and sizes and not heaped together haphazardly. Those who study all sorts of books unmethodically and read a book of history today, a book of psychology next day, a political book on the third day and a religious book some other day, do not acquire any knowledge. The correct method is to select books for study consciously according to one's personal needs and not to leave the selection of books to any chance. One should not study whatever book falls into one's hand. The second point is that after studying a book, the reader should check whether its contents have actually been committed to his memory. The third point is that even if one has a very strong memory, it is not enough to study a book only once. Consecutive study of a book at least twice is necessary for a strong memory and more than two times for a weak memory.

The fourth point is that study must be subject wise. Every time a particular subject should be selected for deep study. A number of relevant books should be chosen and studied. Notes should be taken and a summary should be compiled. Then that summary and the results of that study should be deposited in one of the cages of memory. Only then it can be said that optimum use of memory has been made and that the person concerned has the capability of directing and managing one of the faculties at his disposal. There is a well-known sentence in Nahjul Balaghah, which throws some light on the method of study and the management of thinking. Imam Ali says: "Like the bodies the hearts also get bored. Therefore seek for them interesting pieces of knowledge." (See Nahjul Balagha, Saying 91)

Another example of personal guidance and self-management is exercising a control over one's feelings, emotions and inclinations. We can say that a sensitive man who cannot control his feelings is as imperfect as a licentious man. Basically personality is nothing but the ability of self-control. A man who cannot manage his desires of eating and sleeping and cannot control his tongue, eyes, ears and sexual drive, is not a man in the real sense.

As we have stated in our treatise on Wilas and Wilayat (See: Master and Mastership, I.S.P. 1984), sometimes man is able to acquire so much self-control that he becomes the master of his thoughts and thinking power, as the famous Persian poet Mowlawi says:

"I am master of my thoughts, not a slave of them,
Like a mason who is master of what he builds."

Sometimes man may acquire so much self-control, that he can bring about any change he likes in his body. He can cast off his body if he so wants. Man can bring about changes in the outside world too, but that question is beyond the scope of what we are discussing now.

Man must exercise self-control even in respect of his acts of worship. There is a well-known Prophetic tradition addressed to Jabir in respect of the preservation of interest in devotional acts. The Holy Prophet said: "Do not make worship of Allah hateful to yourself, for with coercion you can neither pass any stage, nor can keep the spirit intact."

As for managing other people, the modern age believes in its importance so much that in Dr. Abu Talib's words, "our age is the age of management." This importance given to management is based on several considerations:

(i) Human assets are the most important assets of every society. Imam Ali says that knowledge is more important than wealth, for knowledge is a human force and a human asset, whereas wealth is a non-human force and a non-human asset. Without this human asset that non-human asset is a calamity. If the non-human asset is missing, it can be acquired with the help of human asset but not vice versa. We see today that illiterate but rich nations possessing huge subterranean resources like Iran[42] and Saudi Arabia are helpless before the world powers lacking these resources and are being exploited by them. A tradition says: "Men are like mines of gold and silver."

(ii) Just like petrol, which is discovered, extracted, refined and then used, the human assets, that is men are also in need of being managed, guided, discovered and turned to account. Unlike the animals that are equipped with instinct, man lacks instinct and requires learning. In other words he is in need of guidance and being led. Man's need of guidance is the basis of the teachings of the Prophets and the philosophy of their mission. The Holy Prophet's mission is also based on this philosophy.

(iii) The third point is that, as we have stated earlier, men, in their behaviour and their spiritual life, have special laws or mechanism and a special system of actions and reactions. If we want to work with human beings, we must know their mechanism and the laws governing their behaviour. Men are like mystery boxes. To open the box of their spirit and to gain their cooperation, more than anything else knowledge and tact are required, but not force. The laws of human behaviour are not to be formulated they are to be discovered like the laws of physics, chemistry and physiology.

It may clearly be seen that Islam has paid due attention to all these three points. The

importance of human assets is illustrated by what Islam states about the position of man, who has been described as the vicegerent of Allah before whom the angels prostrate themselves and who has a Divine spirit in him. The Prophets have come to disclose the hidden treasures of human intellect. Allah says to man: "I have created all things for you and have created you for Myself. He has made available to you all that is in the heavens and the earth. We have created for you all that is in the earth. We have made your livelihood in it. He has created you from the earth and settled you in it."

The second principle is that about which we have said that it is the basis of the Prophets' mission. The third principle is the same that is nowadays called the principle of management. It can be inferred from two Islamic sources, the first of them being the marvellous life account [43] of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali and the rest of the Holy Imams, and the second source being the instructions issued by these great personalities to their representatives, whom they appointed them as the guides of the people. According to the Sirah Ibn Hisham the Holy Prophet told Mu'az bin Jabal: "Make things easy for the people; do not make them difficult; win their hearts by telling them pleasing things; do not scare them away; and when you offer prayers with them, your prayers should be such as suit the weakest of them."

In the policy instructions issued by Imam Ali to his governors and administrators such as Uthman bin Hunaif, Qutham bin Abbas, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Abdullah bin Abbas and especially to Malik Ashtar, hundreds of psychological and social points relating to the principles of management and leadership can be discovered.

Unfortunately we are not aware of the philosophy of these instructions. For example we do not know the basic philosophy of austerity closely connected with leadership. We often describe voluntary austerity as an escape from this world and life. The well-known event of Imam Ali narrated in Nahjul Balagha, which we have reproduced in our article on ascetism, makes this philosophy quite clear. Imam Ali once went to 'Ala bin Ziyad Harithi's house where after some conversation 'Ala made a complain against his brother, Asim bin Ziyad. Imam Ali sent for him and addressed him as "0 enemy of yourself". The Imam reproached 'Asim for his self-imposed asceticism. In reply 'Asim cited Imam Ali's own example. The Imam said: "Allah has made it incumbent on the Imams of the Muslims to keep themselves at the level of the poorest men, so that the poor may not feel ashamed of their poverty." (See: Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 209)

In the charter he issued to Malik Ashtar, Imam Ali throws light on the spirit of the elite and the masses. He says: "Do not rely on those who are self-satisfied, having two much expectations and ever demanding more and more. Instead of them rely on the masses who know the value of service and are ready to follow the truth." (See Nahjul Balagha, Letter 53) In the same charter he discusses some points relating to administration and issues instructions in regard to the manner of dealing with different section of society such as the secretariat staff, army, craftsmen, judges, merchants etc. He throws light on the spirit and the value of each of them.

32. The capability of leadership is either innate or acquired. In fact it is innate as well as acquired. Some persons from childhood show a natural aptitude for leadership. They induce other children to follow their plans, both personal and general. They bring other children under their influence and make them obey them. It is, said that the Iranian king, Nadir while still a child used to draw his plans of invasion and conquest using his herd of sheep as his army. Some people believe that all or most upright Prophets have at some time in their life worked as shepherds in order to gain practical experience of leadership. Of course even an inherent leader if not infallible, needs to gain experience and learn the art of leadership. When Prophets have to be shepherds, it is evident what others will be required to do.

A point that shows ridiculous ignorance of our people is that anybody who for some time has studied jurisprudence and theology, acquired a limited knowledge in this field and writes a small book, is at once proclaimed by his followers the "outstanding leader of Shi'ism." For this very reason the question of marja' (religious authority) is one of the basic problems of the Shi'ah world. We propose to discuss it, Allah Willing, in a separate article under the heading "One of the Basic Problems of Divinity". The fact that our society regards as leaders even those divines who are at the most fit to convey only the formal religious opinion, has stagnated the Shi'ah forces. In fact those who convey the juristic opinion, are successors to the Holy Prophet (only as far as a section of the rules of law is concerned) whereas leadership means succession to the Imam. (A successor to the Imam is responsible for issuing juristic opinion as well as assuming leadership of the Muslims.)

33. Consequences of immaturity:[44] -- As we have stated in the article on Islamic Maturity, No. 5, he who does not possess financial maturity, a custodian and guardian is appointed for him. Similarly in the case of an immature nation another nation comes and immediately become its guardian either overtly or covertly. The old colonialism was an open and unconcealed guardianship whereas the new colonialism is a disguised and concealed one. The guardian nation carries away every thing including the religion of the world nation. What these guardian nations have given to the Muslim nations under their hegemony is only a distorted form of Islam.

In our article on asceticism we have said that compassion is one of the rationales of austerity. In other words when it is not possible to render material help to the needy, at least moral help must be rendered. This sort of asceticism is incumbent, on the leaders.

To this effect we have quoted a tradition from Imam Ali. He said: "Allah, the Almighty has appointed me an Imam of His creation. As such He has made it incumbent on me to be on a level with the poorest so that a poor man may remain content with his poverty and the riches of a rich man may not distract him."

Notes On Leadership In Islam

1. Imam Ali addressing to Uthman said:

"The best man in the sight of Allah is a just ruler, who has been guided by Islam and who guides others - towards it, who keeps up the Holy Prophet's traditions and who exterminates the vile innovations. The worst man in the sight of Allah is a despotic ruler, who himself is misguided and who misguides other, who exterminated the accepted traditions and reintroduces the discarded innovations. I beseech you in the Name of Allah not to be such a leader of this ummah as to be killed by the oppressed, for it has been predicted that a leader of the ummah who will open the gates of ever lasting bloodshed and sanguinary feuds, would be killed. He will create doubts among the ummah and will cause widespread disturbances, with the result that people will not be able to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. They will be agitated and confused. Therefore with your age and experience do not be a pet animal to Marwan and do not allow him to drive you wherever he likes." (See Nahjul Balagha - Sermon164)

The last sentence signifies that a leader must have an independent thinking and must not be a tool in the hands of the people surrounding him. The earlier sentences refer to the importance of the spirit of justice which a leader must possess.

2. Imam Ali's instructions to one of his functionaries whom he had sent to collect zakat.

After giving him certain instructions and advising him to be sincere in his words and deeds, Imam Ali said: "I order you not to be hostile to them, not to oppress them and not to keep yourself away from them, showing your superiority to them because you are a government officer. They are your brethren in faith and are expected to help you in the collection of dues. . . . . . Woe be to the person against whom the poor, the destitute, the beggars, the under-privileged, the sufferers and the way-farers complain before Allah! The worst form of treachery is the embezzlement of public funds and the most despicable form of faithlessness is to deceive the Imam." (See Nahjul Balagha - Letter 26)

3. Imam Ali has said: "In comparison to enjoining what is right and restraining from what is evil, all virtuous deeds and Jihad in the way of Allah, are no more than a breath in an unfathomable ocean. Enjoining what is right and restraining from what is evil do not bring any one closer to his death nor do they diminish the subsistence of anybody. But what is more valuable than all this is a just word before a cruel ruler."

Hence, internal reform (enjoining what is right and retraining from what is wrong) is more important than waging a holy war against the external infidels, but what is all the more important is the struggle against the deviations of a leader.

However, it may be noted that enjoining what is right is a stage of Jihad, and similarly a just

word before a cruel ruler is also a sort of "enjoining right and forbidding wrong."

4. "Imam Ali expressly says that the view of the Khawarij that the Quran is enough and that there is no need of a government, any administrative machinery and any leader is wrong. The Khawarij used to say that "there is no arbiter and judge except Allah". Imam Ali said: "Their slogan is right but they draw a wrong conclusion from it. They say that there should be no government except that of Allah. But the people must have a ruler, whether virtuous or wicked, under whose rule both the faithful and the disbeliever may work and enjoy life." (See: Article - 10 on Nahjul Balagha, Murtaza Mutahhary)

The administrative machinery is called government because it maintains internal and external peace and enforces law and order. It is called Imamat because it is headed by a leader who mobilizes the dormant forces and unfolds the hidden capabilities.

In Nahjul Balaghah expression of Wali and Ra'iyyat has been used for the ruler and the subjects. The expression implies that the duty of the ruler is to protect and take care of his subjects. Imam Ali says: "The greatest claim prescribed by Allah is the claim of the ruler on the subjects and the claim of the subjects on the ruler." (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 216)

5. "The requirements of a human being are not confined to food and shelter. The requirements of man are entirely different from those of a pigeon or a deer. Man has a number of psychological needs also which must be attended to. Therefore it is not enough for a government which wants to be normal, popular and tolerable, to meet only the material needs of the people. It is equally necessary to pay attention to their human and spiritual needs also. What is important is how the government looks at the people. Does it regard them as lifeless tools - which are also incidentally to be maintained; or as beasts of burden and milk-giving animals - that require medical care too, or as human beings having equal rights and privileges. In short, are the people for the leader or the leader for the people?" (Article - 5 on Nahjul Balaghah)

In the above mentioned article we have said that the recognition of the rights of the people and abstinence from anything that is detrimental to their authority is the first essential condition of a sound and normal leadership that wants to satisfy the people and gain their confidence.

We have said in the above mentioned article that the artificial link that the Church maintains between a belief in God and the rejection of the sovereignty of the people and as a corollary of that, between the sovereignty of the people and the rejection of God, has been an important factor in turning the people away from religion and faith.

The Roman Emperor Kaligola (the first century A.C. or the first century B.C.) used to say that rulers had the same kind of superiority over the people as the shepherd over the sheep. The

rulers were like gods and the subjects like the cattle.

Some Western philosophers also believe that the rulers do not hold power for the benefit of their subjects. They think that the rulers have a divine right, that is to say that the subjects have been created for the convenience of the rulers.

6. In the above mentioned article we have said that although the word Ra'iyyat which has been used by Imam Ali, has in Persian lately acquired a disgusting sense, it actually implies the conception that the ruler is for the people, not that the people are for the ruler.

7. We have also said that it is gathered from the verse: **"Allah commands you that you restore trusts to their owners, and if you judge between people, judge justly."** (Surah an-Nisa, 4:58) that the rulers are the custodians of the people. In other words it enunciates the principle: the ruler for the people, not the people for the ruler. The book, Majma' quotes Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Ja'far Sadiq to have said that this verse is addressed to the Imams and the next verse: **"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger"** is addressed to the people. Imam Muhammad Baqir has said: "One of these two verses belongs to us (our rights) and the other belongs to you (your rights)."

Imam Ali has said: "It is essential for the Imam to judge according to what Allah has revealed and to restore the trust. If he does that it is incumbent on the people to listen to him, to obey him and to respond whenever they are called." (al-Mizan quoted from Durr al-Manthur)

8. Imam Ali wrote to his governor in Azerbaijan: "Your job is not a juicy morsel provided to you. It is only a trust committed to your care. You have been appointed by your superior a shepherd (to look after the flock of people placed under you.) As such you have no right to deal with the people in a despotic manner." (See Nahjul Balagha, Letter 5).

In his circular letter addressed to all tax collectors, Imam Ali says:

"Do justice to the people on your part, and look after their needs patiently, for you are a treasurer of the people, a representatives of the Ummah and an ambassador of the Imams". (See Nahjul Balagha, Letter 51)

From what has been said in No. 6 - 9 it is clear that from the viewpoint of Nahjul Balaghah the basis of leadership is that the leader is for the people, not the people for the leader.

Leadership and Management

1. The sense of leadership is synonymous with that of Imamat. While Hidayat (guidance) means to guide to the goal and management is a sort of maturity.

2. The phrase financial maturity is generally used with reference to orphans, although it applies to other individuals also. Matrimonial maturity applies to everybody.

3. **Definition of maturity:** Competence to take care of and to exploit the existing potentialities. This requires knowledge on the one hand and will-power on the other. Knowledge means the knowledge of the meaning, objective, value and the result of a work and ability to choose it.

4. Life is an asset. Longevity is an asset. Man has a marvellous and untapped power. His limbs, organs, and physical and spiritual faculties are all assets. History, culture, time, literature, books, technology, arts and civilization also are assets.

5. Every kind of maturity means some kind of ability of management, but when the word management is used in the sense of man-management, its sense comes closer to that of Imamat.

6. Man-management and leadership are the art of better mobilization, better organization, better control and better employment of human forces.

It is the power of management that turns weakest nations into the most strong nations. The great world leaders are not those who curb their nation and do not allow it to raise its voice. The best leader is he who mobilize, the individuals forces, motivates them, co-ordinates them and create an ideal for all the people. For an ideal two things are necessary. First the people are made ideal-minded and secondly large groups of them are induced to accept the ideal introduced to them.

7. Management is required more by man than it is required by the animals. A flock of sheep can be managed by an illiterate shepherd who knows the pastures and watering places, can prevent the sheep from being scattered and protects them from being attacked by a wolf. If any sheep falls sick, he should be able to give it some treatment. But the sheep have no mysterious spiritual world. They neither have any restless forces stored within them nor do they have any complex morals to learn. They are not the vicegerents of Allah or the manifestations of His Names and Attributes, nor have they been "created of the best stature." That is the reason why the sheep require a shepherd while man needs a leader, and that leader must be more superior to other men than a shepherd is to the sheep.

8. The difference between Prophethood and Imamat is that the first is guidance and the second is leadership. The first is conveying, intimating, apprising and showing the right path. The second is directing by going in front and mobilizing the available forces and organizing them. Some Prophets were guides as well as leaders like Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and the last Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on them). Some others were only guides, but the Imams are only leaders. They are guided by the guidance given by the last Prophet.

9. Difference between the concept of leadership in the modern world and in the terminology of Islam.

10. Three important points about men: (i) Men are great treasures. "They discover for them mental treasures." (ii) Instinct is not enough for human being. (iii) The laws of man's spirit are so complex that a leader cannot be successful without knowing the laws governing human life. The knowledge of these laws is the key of dominating the hearts of the people. Often it is necessary to remove the complexes, fetters and shackles. **"He will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:15). The Holy Prophet's man-management in his family, among his companions and in connection with preparing the troops. He knew how to manage and conduct man.

The Holy Prophet's inspiring instructions, regarding preaching and management, to Mu'az bin Jabal: "Make things easy; do not make them difficult; win the hearts of the people by telling them pleasing things; do not scare them away; and when you offer prayers with them, your prayers should be such as suit the weakest of them."

The incident of Imam Ali and 'Asim bin Ziyad. Imam Ali's extraordinary austerity was a part of his administration.

11. The essential qualities of a leader are: Initiative, creative power of organization, power of attracting people and gaining their love and faith. (Refer to No. 15)

12. The Holy Prophet's leadership astonished Abu Sufyan. The story of three different persons at Tabuk - The story of Abuzhar.

13. The Holy Prophet has said that if three persons travel together, they should make one of them their leader. This shows the importance which Islam attaches to man-management. Addressing the Holy Prophet, Allah has said if he does not specify who would be the Leader, he would not have conveyed Allah's Message.

14. Imam Husayn's life is a superb example of leadership. 15. Qualities of a Leader:

(a) Initiative; (b) Sympathy - Story of Imam Ali and 'Asim ibn Ziyad - public life, (c) Power of organization, (d) Ability of selecting the right man for the right job, (e) Ability of gaining the love and loyalty of the people, (f) Ability of convincing people of the importance and necessity of achieving his objective. (g) Understanding the prevailing conditions. . . . . "Brackish water and choking morsel." (h) Faith and confidence in the objective, (i) Faith and confidence in the success - No wavering - Self confidence (The Holy Prophet and full faith in his mission. Imam Husayn also was confident of the result of what he was doing. (j) Correct choice of an action. (k) Correct choice, (k) Quick choice, (1) Firmness, (m) Determination No

wavering in the choice of any step nor in the choice of the goal itself, (n) Boldness and no fear of the consequences, (o) Foresight, (p) Advance planning of the measures to be taken in case of failure, (q) Magnanimity and broad-mindedness. "Broad-mindedness is essential for leadership." (r) Courage of accepting defeat, (s) Appropriate distribution of work and human force, (t) Will-power and a personality strong enough to inspire and influence other people. A power of delivering the message in a convincing way goes along with such a personality. That was the reason why the pagans thought that the Holy Prophet possessed some mysterious magical power.

Imam Ali addressing to Ibn Abbas said: "This Caliphate is more trivial to me than an old shoe unless I restore a right or redress a wrong." (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon - 33)

"The greatest right prescribed by Allah in that which the ruler can claim on the ruled and that which the ruled can claim on the ruler. It is an obligation prescribed by Allah which each of them owes to the other. This system has been set for the development of love between them and for the glory of their religion. The ruled will not be good unless the rulers are sound, and the rulers will not be good unless the ruled are honest." (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 216)

The real position of a ruler is that of a trustee.

Out of all the qualities of an Imam, the most important qualities are two: justice and guidance. These two are the main objectives for which the Prophets have been raised, so that the people may set up justice. The Holy Prophet has been described as a preacher calling to Allah and an illuminating lamp. From the viewpoint of justice an Imam is a protector and trustee; and from the viewpoint of guidance he is a leader and chief. From both the angles he is a model and an example. His personality is a perfect manifestation of justice as well as a perfect manifestation of progress, maturity and sound leadership.

The most pertinent question in regard to Imamat is what need it satisfies. As Prophethood is the product of a definite need, so is Imamat.

Four assignments of the Holy Prophet: Religious authority, political leadership, dispensation of justice and supervision of the condition and its idea.

The Quranic verse saying that the example of the Holy Prophet is to be followed.

The truth about infallibility and its connection with perfect faith. Hadith of Thaqalayn and its relation to infallibility. The verse, "Your master is only Allah" and its connection with infallibility.

Different uses of the word, "Imam" in connection with religious authority and political leadership - the rightful Imam and the false and despotic Imam.

Rational proof of Imamat and Wilayat in the sense of having power to take independent action - Wilayat a part of the cosmic laws. A Comparative study of the arguments advanced by such scholastic theologians as Allamah Hilli and Shaykh Mufid and the argument of Allamah Tabatabai which we have reproduced in the Khilafat and Wilayat, p. 380.

The Shi'ah discuss the question of Wilayat and Imamat from three angles: religious authority, political leadership and a belief in the perfect man and master of the time.

The question of the master of the time and the question of the friend of Allah - Ascribing administration to someone other than Allah - Ascribing failure to someone other than Allah - Ascribing revelation or bounties to someone other than Allah - There is no question of man's discretion - Meaning of the verse, "for myself I have no power to benefit."

The Qur'an and man - What is the position of man according to the Qur'an? He is before whom the angels prostrated, themselves.

The discussion of 'Divine favour' (Lutf) and the 'more appropriate' - Through this discussion the existence of an infallible Imam is proved - The discussion of the real position of man - Imamat in the sense of spiritual guardianship shows man's importance, and hence its discussion is the discussion of man.

Man in fact has two lives, one external and the other spiritual. Both the lives are actual. It is not that man's spiritual life is something unreal or phenomenal.

Difference between Prophethood and Wilayat (The Khilafat and Wilayat, P. 379 and See, Master and Mastership).

The Holy Quran has given the reason why the Prophets have always been the human beings. The gist of the matter is that the Prophets besides being a medium of conveyance of the Divine message are a medium of imparting knowledge also. Man can receive knowledge from a non-human being but he can neither love him, nor can he emulate him.

"How comes it that religion has made history, brought a culture into existence, trained innumerable men and many generations as it wanted, but it has not been able over history to bring into existence a single ideal city? The sociologists say and the historians admit that since Plato's time till today and even during Mesopotamian civilization, not a single ideal city of this type has ever existed. The reason is that an ideal city is that in which there should not be a Divine Leader (Imam)" (Ummah and Imam p. 100)

The question is why an ideal city as conceived by the philosophers does not have an Imam. Actually it is a drawback of the school of philosophers. Their school has no spiritual basis. It

has only rational basis.

The difference between the religious ideology and other ideologies is not exclusively that of having and not having an Imam. Further, such a model should be looked for among the companions and the followers of the Holy Prophet, not in the exceptional personality of an Imam or the Prophet. If it is possible for everybody to become an Imam, then why one individual only? If it is not possible, then an Imam cannot be an example for others. Anyhow, he can be a supreme model.

It appears that the thesis of the book "Ummah and Imamah" has been drawn from A Preface to Leadership. The only difference is that the Ummah and Imamah is a book that is committed to the support of a religious theory, whereas the book, A Preface to Leadership has no such commitment and is exclusively based on psychological aspects. It expressly says that Imam, especially the Hidden Imam meets the spiritual requirement of man, who needs a leader.

Imamat of Imams

One of the proofs of Imamat is the Divine knowledge of an Imam and the extraordinary respect that the eminent Alawis and others showed to the Imams while they were still children. When it was said to Ali ibn Jafar, an uncle of Imam Jawad's father: "In spite of being a grand old man and son of Ja'far ibn Muhammad you say so about this chief, " he said: "I think you are a devil." He then took hold of his beard and said: "What can I do, when Allah considered him fit for this position and did not consider me fit in spite of my grey hair?" (Imam as Sadiq p. 150)

[41] A compromise on principles may be in the name of expedience which includes undue regard for someone. A compromise may also be due to making discrimination in showing favour or accepting an intercession. It is a known fact that the Holy Prophet awarded legal punishment even to prominent men of the Quraysh. He abstained from showing undue favour to anybody. There are three main reasons of a compromise on principles: One is fear; another is greed. Therefore a reformer must be bold, and must not be liable to be influenced by any kind of bribe including money, flattery, women etc. The third cause of compromise on principles is nepotism and showing undue favour to friends. A reformer's friendship must be for the sake of Allah only. It may be noted that undue favour has been described in the Qur'an as 'idhan' which originally meant lubricating and oiling, and hence includes flattery and deceit, and is used in the sense of compromising also. Who wish you to compromise so that they may also compromise. A compromise on principles may be conscious but tacit or may be unconscious. Another form of a compromise on principles is the exploitation of the weak points of society instead of combating them, and being carried away by the prevailing trend of society. The examples of this attitude are the acceptance of the kissing of hands and showing too much sensitiveness to the questions of dispute between the Shi'ah and the Sunnis. The story of the late Mirza Muhammad Arbab can be cited as an example. The following Qur'anic

verse also refers to this subject: **"My people, I delivered my Lord's message to you and gave you good advice, but you do not like those who give you good advice."** (Surah al-A'raf, 7:79) Sufyan Thawri says: "If you find a scholar having many friends, you can be sure that he is indiscriminate. Had he been telling the truth only, people would not have liked him." Abuzar said: "Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong have left for me no friends." Imam Ali said: "Do not try to use artificial manners to be intimate with me and do not address me with those words with which the tyrants are addressed." These words of the Imam show that to like flattery and the use of high sounding titles is also a sort of a compromise on principles. Those who like such cheap things do not succeed in reforming society. Imam Ali further said: "For me the strong is weak till I force him to restore the rights of others." He means to say that he is not one of those who compromise on principles. We frequently meet with the word compromise in connection with the Mu'awiya affair and the proposals put to Imam Ali to come to terms with him. Imam Ali said that a leader must not be a specimen of the depravity of his people. "He should not be an impious man commanding others to piety or an ailing physician treating other people." How can a man who is eating dates himself ask others not to eat them. "He who puts himself as a leader of the people, should begin the reform with himself...." A leader must not be greedy for avarice means permanent bondage, which is contrary to spiritual and moral freedom. In respect of Christ Imam Ali says: "He had no wife to seduce him, no child to grieve him, no property to divert his attention and no cupidity to disgrace him." (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 160). In short, a man who is morally a materialist cannot be a true reformer and a materialist philosopher cannot morally be a 100 per cent non materialistic. Other qualities of a reformer: Calmness in spite of sensitiveness. An example of calmness in Imam Ali's behaviour. A woman from Basrah and a Kharijite once abused him, but he paid no attention to their foul language. A reformer must be iron-clad. He should not be delicate, but he should be sensitive. An example of being sensitive without being delicate is the story of Sufiyan Ghamidi, who arrived in Anbar. "If any Muslim dies henceforth on account of sorrow .... "Should I pass the night while I have overeaten and there are hungry stomachs around me?"

[42] It may be noted that these notes were written before Islamic revolution had taken place in Iran.

[43] A part of the life account of the Holy Prophet should be studied from the viewpoint of the principles of leadership.

[44] Item No. 33 deals with signs of immaturity, which have been mentioned in the article on Islamic maturity in the Book, Divine Succur in Human Life.

Life of the Next World

The principle of belief in the eternal life of the next world is one of the important points of Islamic conception of cosmos and a fundamental tenet of Islam. A belief in the next world is an essential condition of being a Muslim and anyone who denies that is not a Muslim.

Next to the confession of monotheism, this is the most important doctrine preached by all the Prophets without any exception. The scholastic theologians of Islam call it the doctrine of the Resurrection.

In the Holy Quran we come across hundreds of verses, which in some way or other deal with the Day of Judgement, the life after death, the resurrection of the dead, the great account, the deed-sheets, the heaven, the hell, the eternality of the next world and other questions relating to the world after death. In 12 verses a belief in the Last Day has been formally mentioned next to the belief in Allah.

The Holy Qur'an has used different expressions to denote the Day of Resurrection. Each one of these expressions is full of gnostic significance. The Last Day is one of them. By using this expression the Holy Quran wants to draw our attention to two points:

i. That human life, and for that matter the entire length of time of the existence of the world, is divided into two periods, each of which may be called a day. The First Day (the period of the duration of this world) will come to an end, but the Last Day (the period of the duration of the next world) is endless. The Qur'an has called this world life the first and the next world life the last. (Vide Surah al-Layl, 92:13 and az-Zuha, 93:4)

ii. That even now when we are passing through the first period and have not reached the second period and the second day, our success during this day as well as that day depends on our faith, which draws our attention to good deeds and their reaction. We must understand that like us our thoughts, words, deeds and habits also, from the slightest to the biggest, have the first day and the last day. It is not that our words and deeds vanish and are obliterated during the first day. They continue to exist and will have to be accounted for on the Day of Judgement. Therefore we must do our best to put right ourselves, our actions and our intentions, and abstain from bad thoughts and

evil deeds. Thus we should always step forward on the way of righteousness and good behaviour, for on our faith depends our bliss on that day. It is man's conduct in this world that makes his life happy or miserable in the next. That is why the Qur'an regards the belief in the next world or the Last Day absolutely necessary for man's prosperity.

Source of Belief in the Life of the Next World

The chief source of belief in the eternal life of the next world is the Divine revelation conveyed to mankind through the Prophets.

Following his recognition of Allah, belief in the veracity of the Prophets and knowing for certain that what the Prophets convey as revelation has really come from Allah and is therefore true, man comes to believe in the Day of Resurrection and the eternal life of the next world. This doctrine has been described by the Prophets as the most important doctrine next to Monotheism.

As such, the degree of the faith a person has in the life of the next world depends, on the one hand, on the degree of his faith in Prophethood and the veracity of the Prophets, and on the other, on the degree of the correctness and rationality of his conception of the Hereafter, and its being free from vulgar and absurd ideas.

In addition to the Divine revelation conveyed by the Prophets, there are some other methods of acquiring belief in the Hereafter. Man through his intellectual and scientific efforts can get to, at least, some strong indications which support what the Prophets say about the next world. These methods are as under:

i. Through knowing Allah;

ii. Through knowing the World;

iii. Through knowing the spirit and mentality of man.

For the present we do not propose to enter into the discussion of these methods which requires lengthy philosophical and scientific arguments. We intend to confine our attention to considering the method of Prophethood and revelation only. But as the Qur'an itself has in some verses expressly mentioned these methods and in some other verses hinted at them, we will refer to them in a subsequent section under the heading, the Arguments of the Quran in Respect of the Next world. So that the question of eternal life in the next world may become clear from the viewpoint of Islam, it is necessary to consider the following questions:

i. Nature of death,

ii. Life after death,

iii. Purgatory or Barzakh,

iv. Resurrection,

v. Connection of this worldly life with the life after death, Eternal existence of human deeds in a corporeal form,

vii. Common and distinguishing features of the life of this world and the life of the next world, Arguments of the Quran in respect of the next world.

Nature of Death

What is death? Is it destruction, annihilation, and non-existence or is it a change, a development and a shifting from one world to another?

This is a question which has always engaged man's attention. Every one is keen either to find out an answer to it direct or to accept an answer already given.

By virtue of being Muslims we would like to draw the answer to this question from the Holy Qur'an and have faith in what the Qur'an has said in this respect.

The Qur'an has its own explanation regarding the nature of death. It has used the word, *'tawaffi'* in this connection.

This word means to receive in full. In 14 verses the Qur'an has used this expression. All these verses, show that from the Qur'anic point of view death means gathering and receiving into custody. In other words man at the time of his death gets into the custody of the Divine authorities, who receive him in full. From this expression the following points may be inferred:

(i) Death does not mean annihilation and obliteration. It is just a shifting from one world to another world and from one stage of life to another stage. Human life continues after death, though in a different form.

(ii) What actually constitutes man and his self is not his body and his physical and ancillary systems, which gradually decay and decompose in this very world. What really constitutes his personality and ego is that which has been described by the Qur'an as 'self' and occasionally as soul.

(iii) Man's soul or his 'self' is the real constituent of his personality. Man is immortal because his soul is immortal. His soul rests and exists at a horizon above the horizon of matter and material things. Although it is an outcome of the evolution of the essence of natural phenomena which is transformed into the soul as the result of its evolution, its horizon is changed and it becomes a thing of another world which is extra-natural. With the death the soul shifts to a different category and class, that is the class of soul. In other words this extra-material reality is taken back and received into angelic custody.

The verses which deal with the genesis and are not concerned with the other worldly life, the Qur'an has advanced the

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point that man is a reality belonging to an extra-material class. The Quran in respect of Adam, the first man says: ***"I have breathed into him of My spirit."*** (Surah al-Hijr 15:29).

The question of soul and its survival after death is one of the basic teachings of Islam. One half of the undeniable teachings of Islam is based on the doctrine that soul is independent of the body and that it continues to exist after death. All real human values are based on this truth, without which they will be nothing more than a figment of imagination.

All the verses that speak of life immediately after death, a few examples of which we propose to quote, prove that the soul is a reality independent of the body and that it continues to exist even when the body has been annihilated.

Some people think that from the viewpoint of the Quran there exists no soul or spirit. The existence of man comes to an end with his death, after which he neither possesses consciousness nor has he any feeling of joy or pain. At the time of Resurrection man will get a new life and it is at that time alone that he will rediscover himself and the world. But this theory is totally belied by the verses which mention life immediately following death.

The exponents of this theory think that those who believe in the existence of soul or spirit base their claim on the verse: "Say: The spirit is by command of my Lord." (Surah Bani Israil, 17:55). They say that although the word, *'ruh'* has been repeatedly mentioned in the Quran, yet it means something different from what is called soul. In this verse also it signifies the same thing as meant in other verses.

These people do not know that those who believe in the existence of soul do not base their argument on this verse. There are about 20 other verses, in which soul has been mentioned either absolutely or in the form of a possessive case, an adjectival phase etc. such as Our spirit, My spirit, holy spirit, a spirit by Our Command. Concerning man it has been said: ***And I breathed into him of My spirit***. This expression shows that from the viewpoint of the Qur'an

there exists a reality superior to the angels and the men and it is this reality which is called the spirit. As a blessing of Allah the angels and the men have this reality described as "by My Command". The verse, I breathed into him of My spirit along with other verses shows that the spirit of man has an extraordinary reality.

Not only many verses of the Qur'an confirm the independent existence of human soul, but this view is also corroborated by numerous reports of uninterrupted chain of transmission in the books of Ahadith as well as by many passages in Nahjul Balaghah (See: Peak of Eloquence, I. S.P. 1984) and the supplications of the holy Imams.

The fact is that the denial of the existence of soul is a filthy Western idea inspired by the materialism of the West. Unfortunately some well-intentioned followers of the Quran have also adopted it.

Now we quote by the way of examples, three out of the four verses in which the word *'tawaffi'* (to gather or receive in full) has been used in connection with death. In some of these verses such actions have been attributed to the people immediately after their death as are performed by living persons (such as speaking, wishing and demanding).

(i) ***"As for those whom the angels took (in death) while they wronged themselves, the angels said to them: In what were you engaged? They said: We were oppressed in the land. The angels said: Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you would have migrated therein? The dwelling of such people will be Hell fire, a terrible destination."*** (Surah An Nisa', 4:97)

This verse is in respect of those people who succumb to the pressure of their circumstances because they live in an unfavourable environment controlled by their opponents. Their excuse is that their environment being unfavourable to them, they cannot do anything. Instead of trying to bring about a change in their atmosphere and if that was not possible, shift to a better environment, they continue to live in the same corrupt environment and submerge themselves in its quagmire. After extracting their souls the angels of Allah talk to them and say that their plea was unsatisfactory, for they failed to at least emigrate to another environment. The angels remind them that they themselves are responsible for their acts of omission and commision.

The Holy Qur'an tells us in this verse that helplessness in a certain place cannot be a valid excuse unless the way of emigration from it to another place is also closed.

As we see, in this verse death, which is apparently annihilation and termination, has been expressed by the word, *tawaffi* which signifies receiving into custody. Further, this verse reports of a dialogue between the angels and a man after his death. Should the reality of man not continue after his death and should his reality become merely his insensitive and unconscious body, evidently this dialogue would be meaningless. This verse makes it clear

that man after leaving this world and this life, can talk with the invisible creatures known as the angels, although with a different set of eyes, ears and tongue.

(ii) And they say: ***"When we are lost in the earth, how can we then be recreated? In fact, they have no faith in the Day of Judgement. Muhammad, say: 'The angel of death who has charge concerning you, will cause you to die and afterward to your Lord you will be returned."*** (Surah as-Sajdah, 32 : 10)

In this verse the Holy Qur'an removes the doubt of those who denied the Hereafter. They asked how they could be raised again when following their death every particle of them would have been totally decomposed and destroyed.

The Qur'an clearly says that the doubt expressed by them is a mere pretext to conceal their obstinacy. Anyhow, replying to their question the Qur'an says that contrary to what they assert, their real personality and their real 'self' are not the things which, as they allege, are lost. Actually they with their entire personality are gathered by the angel of death.

Those who raised this doubt meant by being lost in the earth that when all the parts of their body would have been scattered and every particle of their body would have been decomposed, how would it be possible to recreate and revive it?

The same doubt has been mentioned in some other verses also and there a different answer has been given to this question. There it has been pointed out that the dead body is lost from the viewpoint of man only. No doubt it is impossible for a human being to recollect all its particles, but for Allah Who is Omnipotent and Omniscient, it is not difficult to do so.

In the previous verse the argument of those who deny Resurrection was based on the impossibility of the recollection of the particles of the dead bodies. But here their argument is different and that is why it has been answered differently. Here it has been argued that with the loss of the particles of his body, the real personality of man is also lost and no question of 'I' or 'We' is left. The Qur'an says that contrary to what they think, the real personality of man is never lost, and hence there is no need of finding it again. On the contrary man as well as his personality are gathered by the angels at the time of his death.

The following verse also expressly mentions the continuation of the real personality of man (his soul) after his death, although his body ceases to exist then:

(iii) ***"Allah receives man's souls at the time of their death. Their souls do not die when they are sleeping. During people's sleep He withholds those souls which He has decreed to die and releases the others for an appointed time. In this, in fact, there is an evidence (of truth) for the thoughtful people."*** (Surah az Zumar, 39 : 42)

This verse describes the similarity of sleep and death, and inter alia the similarity of waking and resurrection. Sleep is a slight and weak form of death and death is an intense and strong form of sleep. In both these cases the human soul shifts from one state of life to another. The difference is that in the case of sleep man usually does not notice the change and when he wakes up he does not realize that he has actually returned from some journey. In contrast in the case of death everything becomes clear to him.

It may be gathered from all these three verses put together that from the Qur'anic point of view, the nature of death is not annihilation, termination and non-existence. It is only shifting from one state of life to another.

Incidentally the last verse throws light on the viewpoint of the Qur'an about the nature of sleep also. Although physically sleep is the suspension of certain natural faculties, from spiritual point of view it is an escape to the kingdom of heaven. Like the question of death, the question of sleep is also one of those things the true nature of which is not fully known. All that is known in this connection is merely a part of the physical developments that take place in the physical domain.

After Death

Does man immediately after death pass direct to the stage of resurrection and is his case finally decided then and there? Or does he during the period between death and resurrection pass through a special world to be resurrected only on the Day of Resurrection? We know that it is known to Allah only when the Day of Resurrection will arrive. Even the Prophets have expressed their unawareness in that respect.

It is gathered from the Qur'an and numerous reliable reports which have come down to us from the Holy Prophet and the Imams, that no one reaches the stage of Resurrection immediately after death, because that stage will be accompanied by so many upheavals and revolutionary changes in everything known to us, such as the mountains, the oceans, the moon, the sun, the stars and the galaxies. At that time nothing will be left intact. Further, at the time of Resurrection all men of the past and the present will be gathered together. But we see that the world is still intact and probably will remain so for another billions of years. Meanwhile innumerable human beings are still to be born.

Similarly it is gathered from the foregoing and so many other verses of the Quran that no one during the period between death and Resurrection shall remain motionless and unconscious. In other words, man shall not be in a torpid state, feeling neither pleasure or joy nor grief or pain. Immediately after his death man enters a new stage of life, in which he feels everything. Certain things give him pleasure and certain other things give him pain. Anyhow, his pleasure and pain are related to his conduct in this world only. This stage will continue till the Resurrection takes place. At that time so many upheavals will overtake the whole world in a

moment that from the farthest stars to our earth every thing will be revolutionized. With this that world which is the intermediary stage between this world and the Resurrection will come to an end.

Thus from the viewpoint of the Qur'an the post-death world has two stages or, to be more exact, after his death man passes through two worlds. The world which will come to an end like the present world is called the *barzakh* or purgatory. The other is the post-resurrection world which shall never come to an end. Now let us briefly discuss these two worlds.

Barzakh or Purgatory

A thing which lies between two other things as a barrier and separates them is called barzakh. The Qur'an has used this word to indicate the life between death and the Resurrection. The Qur'an says: ***"Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back, so that I may do some good I did not do (in the world). But nay! These are mere words which he utters and behind them is a barzakh until the day of their Resurrection."*** (Surah al Mu'minun 23:100)

This is the only verse that calls the interval between death and resurrection the *barzakh*. The Muslim scholars have borrowed this word from here and named the world between death and resurrection the barzakh.

About the continuity of life after death this verse says only that men after their death repent and request their return to the world, but their request is turned down. This verse shows specifically that man after his death has a sort of life. That is why he asks for being sent back to the earthly world, although his request is not accepted.

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There are many verses which indicate that man during the period, between his death and Resurrection is endowed with a sort of life in which he speaks, has feelings of pleasure and pain and can enjoy a sort of happy life. On the whole, there are about 15 verses in the Qur'an which in some way or other speak of a life process, from which it may be gathered that between the period of death and Resurrection man enjoys a full-fledged life. These verses may be divided into several categories.

(i) There are verses which quote some conversations between the righteous or the wicked men on the one hand and the angels on the other. These conversations took place immediately after death. Such verses are many. We have already cited the verse 97 of the surah an-Nisa' and the

verse 100 of the surah al-Mu'minun. (ii) There are some other verses according to which the angels talk to the righteous and tell them to enjoy the bounties of Allah from that time onward. They do not keep them waiting for the Day of Resurrection. The following two verses contain this point:

"They will be received by the angels of mercy with the greetings: Peace be on you! Enter the Garden as a reward for your good deeds." (Surah an-Nahl, 16 : 32)

It was said to him (after his death): Enter paradise. He said: *"Would that my people knew that my Lord had pardoned me and made me of the honoured ones."* (Surah Yasin, 36:26 - 27)

In the verses preceding to this verse a conversation of this believer with his people was quoted. He called upon his people to follow the Prophets who invited them towards monotheism in Antioch (Antakiyah). He announced his faith and asked others to listen to him and follow his example. But his people did not listen to him till he died, and went to the other world. When he saw that he was pardoned by Allah and honoured by Him he wished that his people who were still in the mundane world knew how happy he was in the other world. Evidently all this happened before Resurrection for after Resurrection none would be left on the earth.

Incidentally it may be noted that for the righteous after their death there are several paradises, not one single paradise. In the next world they vary according to degree of their inmates' proximity to Allah. In addition to these paradises, there are some other paradises, as reported by the chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet which relate to the world of Barzakh, not to the Day of Judgement. Hence the paradise mentioned in the above quoted two verses should not give the wrong impression that it relates to the Day of Judgement.

(iii) The third group of verses do not report any conversation between the angels and the men. They only describe the happy life of the righteous and the miserable life of the wicked during the period between death and Resurrection. The following two verses belong to this category:

> (i) ***"Think not of those who have been slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are living with their Lord and are being provided with the means of living. They are jubilant because of that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and wish that those who have been left behind join them."*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 169 - 170)
>
> (ii) ***"A dreadful doom encompassed Firawn's folk. They will be exposed to the Fire mornings and evenings and on the Day of Resurrection it will be said: People of Firawn's folk suffer the most awful doom."*** (Surah al-Mu'nim, 40:45-46)

This verse mentions two kinds of punishment in respect of the Fir'awn's followers. The first is the pre-Resurrection punishment described as a dreadful doom. Fir'awn's men are exposed to

the Fire two times everyday. The other punishment is the Post-Resurrection punishment described as the most awful doom. On the Day of Judgement an order will be given to throw these people into the Hell. Only in respect of the first punishment the time of morning and evening has been specified.

Interpreting this verse Imam Ali has said that the first punishment is meted out in the Barzakh where the same system of morning, evening, year and month prevails as in this world. In contrast, the second punishment relates to the post-Resurrection world where there is no morning, evening, week, month or year.

In the reports which have come down to us from the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali and other Imams in respect of the Barzakh, much stress has been laid on the life of the believers and the sinners during their stay in the Barzakh.

During the Battle of Badr a number of the Prominent leaders of Quraysh were killed. When fighting was over, the Holy Prophet ordered their bodies to be thrown into a well near Badr. Then the Holy Prophet himself went to that well, and putting his head inside the well and addressing the dead said: *"We have found that what Allah had promised to us has come true. Have you also got what He had promised to you?"*

Some companions of the Holy Prophet said: "Prophet of Allah, do you talk with those who have been slain and are dead? Do they hear what you say?" The Holy Prophet said: "Now they hear better than you."

From this tradition and other similar traditions we can see that in spite of the separation between the body and the soul with death, the soul does not totally sever its relation with the body with which it was united for years.

On the 10th Muharram Imam Husayn offered his morning prayers in congregation. Then he turned to his companions and delivered a short speech in which he said: *"Be calm and patient for a little while. Death is nothing but a bridge by means of which you cross from the bank of pain and grief to the bank of happiness, honour and vast paradise."*

There is a tradition which says that people are asleep. As soon as they die, they wake up. That means that the degree of life after death is higher than that before death. During sleep man's consciousness becomes weak. It is a state between life and death. When man is awake his life is more perfect. Similarly his life in the Barzakh is to some extent more perfect than that in this world.

There are two points worth mentioning here:

(i) According to the reports from the Imams, in the Barzakh man is interrogated about his

faith and belief only. Other questions are left to the Day of Resurrection.

(ii) The meritorious deeds performed by his relatives with the intention that their reward should go to the dead person, make the dead person happy and are to his advantage. If alms and charities whether in the form of endowments or otherwise, are given with the intention that their reward should go to one's departed father, mother, friend, teacher or anyone else, these charities may be regarded as a gift to the deceased person concerned. They make him blissful. The same is the case with the invocation, asking for Allah's forgiveness, circumambulation of the Ka'bah and the pilgrimage to Makkah and other Holy place if performed on behalf of a dead person. It is possible for the children who have displeased their parents during their lifetime to do something to please them after their death. The other way round is also possible.

Resurrection

The second stage of the eternal life is Resurrection which, unlike the Barzakh, is not an individual affair but shall involve the entire mankind and the whole world. With Resurrection the whole universe shall enter a new stage and a new phase of life. The entire system will be changed.

Where the Qur'an has told us of this great event, it has said that at the time of the Resurrection the stars shall fade, the sun shall lose its brilliance, the oceans shall become dry, everything shall go flat, the mountains shall be obliterated and there shall be screams, yells and violent convulsions all over the world followed by unprecedented changes.

What is gathered from the Quran is that the whole world shall be devastated and everything shall be obliterated. Then a new world shall be born which shall be basically different from the existing world. The new world shall have absolutely different laws and different systems, and shall continue to exist for ever.

In the Holy Quran Resurrection has been given various names, each name representing a certain characteristic of it. As it is the day of which the whole mankind will be gathered together, it is called the Day of Assemblage, the Day of Gathering and the Day of Meeting. As on that day all secrets will be disclosed and all realities will be laid bare it is called the day of unfolding and the day when the hidden thoughts will be searched out. As it is the day that will last for ever, it is called the day of eternity. As it is the day when men will be disillusioned and win be repenting and regretting, it is called the day of grief and the day of mutual disillusion. And as the Resurrection is the greatest event and the biggest piece of news, it is called the Great Tidings.

Relation Between This Life and the Next

A very basic point to which the revealed Books have drawn our attention is the relation between the life of these two worlds. The life of the next world is inseparable from the life of this world. The seed of the life after death is sown in this world by man himself, who determines in this life what is going to happen to him in the next life.

Pure faith, correct belief, realistic conception of the world, excellent human habits free from jealousy, cheating, malice, hatred and fraud, as well as the good deeds conducive to the development of the individual and society performed with sincerity of purpose, are the things which ensure happy eternal life. In contrast, disbelief, wrong conceptions, dirty habits, selfishness, self-importance, self-conceitedness, tyranny, oppression, hypocrisy, taking usury, telling lies, calumny, back-biting, fault-finding, creating rift, abstention from the worship of the Creator and other similar qualities and habits are the things which make one's life very miserable in the next world.

There is a beautiful saying of the Holy Prophet. He said: *"This world is the cultivation field of the next world. As you sow in this world, so you will reap in the next."*

AS it is not possible for anyone to sow barley and reap wheat, to sow thorns and pluck flowers, or to sow colocynth and pick dates, similarly it is also impossible for a man whose conduct is bad in this world, to be happy and comfortable in the next.

Embodiment and Eternity of Human Deeds

It is gathered from the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Imams that not only man continues to exist after his death, but his deeds and works are also so preserved that they do not disappear. In his post-Resurrection life man will see all his past deeds depicted and embodied. Good deeds will have very beautiful, attractive and pleasing forms. They will be a source of delight and enjoyment. The forms of the evil deeds will be very ugly, repulsive and horrible. They will be a source of pain, suffering and torture.

Here we confine ourselves to the mention of three verses of the Quran and two sayings of the Holy Prophet in this connection:

(i) ***"On the Day when every soul will find itself confronted with all that it has done of good and all that it has done of evil. Every soul will long that there might be a mighty space between it and that evil."*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3 : 30)

This verse expressly says that man will find before him the actual good and bad deeds of his. The good deeds will be presented in pleasing and attractive forms, but the forms in which bad deeds will appear will be so repulsive and loathsome, that man would like to remove them from his sight or to run away from them. But he would not be able to do either, because in that world man's deeds are almost a part of his existence and cannot be separated from him.

(ii) ***"They will find before them whatever they did in this world."*** (Surah al-Kahf, 18 : 49)

This verse says exactly the same thing as the previous one.

(iii) ***"That day mankind will issue forth in scattered groups to be shown their deeds (in the display centre of the deeds). And whosoever does an atom's weight of good will see it then, and whosoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it then."*** (Surah Zilzal, 99:6-8)

Man is immortal and eternal, and so are his deeds and works. In the next world he will be living with the deeds with which he has lived in this world. Man's deeds are his good or bad assets. It depends on them whether his everlasting life in the next world will be happy or miserable.

Traditions (Ahadith)

(i) Some Muslims who came from a distant place were received by the Holy Prophet. In the course of their conversation with him they asked the Holy Prophet to prescribe for them some useful rules of conduct. Among other things the Holy Prophet counselled them to take immediate action to choose good companions for the next world, where the living companions of everybody would be the embodiments of his own deeds.

A man who has a belief in the eternal life of the next world is always very particular about his thoughts, habits and actions, for he knows that these things should not be looked upon as transient affairs. They constitute his baggage which he sends to the next world in advance. He will have to live with it.

Common and Uncommon Points of This Life and the Next

A point common to the life of this world and to the life of the next is that both the lives are real and exist actually. In both the lives man is conscious of himself and whatever relates to him. In both the lives he feels pain and pleasure and is happy and miserable. In both the lives his actions are governed by his instincts, both animal and purely human. In both the lives he lives with his body and all his limbs and organs. Anyhow, there are some basic differences also.

In this world there is a system of procreation and reproduction as well as that of childhood, youth and old age followed by death. These systems do not exist in the next world. In this world it is necessary to work, to sow seeds and prepare the ground. In the next world that which was sown in this world will be reaped. This world is the place of doing work and the next world is the place of drawing results and giving account. In this world man can change

his destiny by changing the course of his actions. In the next world there is no such possibility. In this world life is mixed with death. Every life is entwined with lifeless matter. In addition to that, the dead comes out of the living and the living comes out of the dead. The lifeless matter under certain conditions turns into the living organism and the living organism turns into the lifeless matter. But in that world pure life prevails. The matter of that world is also living. The earth and the sky of that world are living. The gardens and their fruits are living as much as man's own embodied works. The fire and its chastisement are also living and conscious. Here everything is governed by its causes and spatial and temporal conditions. This world is that of motion and development. In that world there exist only Divine Will and Divine sovereignty. There man's perception and his consciousness are stronger and his faculties of sight and hearing sharper than in this world. In other words, there the curtains will be lifted and man will see the inner truths far better. The Holy Quran says: ***"Now we have removed from you your covering and piercing is your sight this day."*** (Surah Qaf, 55:22)

Here in this world man always had a feeling of being dejected, tired and fed up, especially of monotony. It appears as if he has lost something and is looking for it. Anything he comes across he takes it to be his lost thing, and feels happy for a while. But soon he realizes that it is not what he wanted. He again begins to feel dejected and goes after something else. Man always wants something which he has not and is fed up with that which he has.

But in the next world, where man will get what he has wanted from the depth of his heart and what he has really missed, that is eternal life in the proximity of Allah, there will be no question of being tired, fed up or dejected. The Qur'an hints at this very point when it says: ***"They have no desire to be removed from there."*** (Surah al-Khaf, 18:108)

Unlike this world, in the next world people will not wish any change. In spite of abiding in Paradise for ever, its inmates will never be bored. As everything they may desire will be available to them, they will not be troubled by any unsatisfied craving.

Arguments of the Quran

Although our belief in Resurrection is a corollary of our belief in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophets and hence it is not necessary to advance any arguments or to produce any scientific evidence in respect of it, yet in view of the fact that the Qur'an itself in order to impress the point logically on our minds, has put forward some arguments, we propose to mention them here briefly.

The arguments of the Quran consist of a series of replies to those who denied Resurrection. Some of these replies have been given to show that there is nothing wrong with the idea of Resurrection. They have been given to those who claimed that Resurrection was impossible to take place. Some other verses go a step further and say that even in this world there exist certain phenomena resembling Resurrection and hence there is no reason why it should be

regarded as impossible or improbable. Some verses go even further and declare that Resurrection is an inevitable and natural result of the judicious scheme of the creation of the universe. Thus these verses can be arranged into three groups. We mention them here one by one.

I. The Holy Quran says: ***"He has coined for Us a similitude and forgotten the fact of his creation, saying: 'Who will revive them bones when they have rotten away.' Say: 'He will revive them who produced them for the first time. He is the Knower of every creation."*** (Surah Yasin 36 : 78)

This verse is in reply to that disbeliever who came to the Holy Prophet with a rotten bone in his hand. He pressed the bone and powdered it. Then he scattered the powder in the air. Thereafter he asked: 'Who will revive these scattered particles'. The Quran answers: 'He who created the bones at the first. '

Sometimes man judges the things by the standard of his own capacity and on this basis divides them into those that are possible and those that are impossible. When he finds a thing to be beyond his power he declares it to be impossible in itself. The Qur'an says that to accomplish a thing may be impossible for man, but that cannot be impossible for the Power that created life in the dead matter for the first time. For that Power it is possible to revive the dead also.

II. The second group of the verses which mention some instances of the revival is further divided into two sets of verses.

(i) There are verses which recount a particular event of the past when a dead body was revived, like the verses which narrate the story of Prophet Ibrahim, who said to Allah:

"My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. He said: 'Do you not believe? 'Ibrahim said: 'Yes, but I ask in order that my heart be at ease.' His Lord said: 'Take four of the birds, cut off their heads and cut their bodies into pieces. Then place a part of them on each hill. Then call those birds. You will see that the birds will come to life and will rush to you." (Surah al Baqarah 2 : 260)

(ii) There are other verses which are not based on any supernatural event. They cite the existing system known to everybody. The grass which withers and dies during autumn and winter, again comes to life during spring. As it is observed by everybody, the earth after being verdant and full of life loses its vitality and vigour and dies, and when the conditions change with the change of season, it once again comes to life and the plants, the trees and the grass begin to thrive and blossom. A time will come when the entire system of the world will shrivel and dry up. The sun and the stars will be blown up. The whole world will die, but not for ever. Everything will come to life again, though in a different form and under different

conditions.

At present we, human beings live on the earth. We see that in 365 days the earth passes through a cycle of death and life. Normally we live up to 50, 60 or 70 and sometime even up to 100 years or more. During this period we see this cycle of life an death dozens of times. That is why it causes us no surprise that the earth dies and again comes to life. Suppose the duration of our life had been only a few months as is the case with some insects, and suppose we had not known how to read and were not aware of the annual revolution of the earth, we would not have believed that the dead earth comes to life again, because we would not have observed this phenomenon. Naturally for a mosquito that appears in the spring and dies in the autumn and winter the conception of the renewal of the life of a garden is unimaginable.

Can a worm living in a tree or a mosquito living in a garden, whose entire world is that tree or that garden, imagine that that tree or that garden is a subordinate part of a bigger system called farm, that farm in its turn is a part of another system called district, that district is a part of another system called province, that province is apart of another system called country, that country is a part of another system called the system of the earth and that the earth is a part of our solar system?

How can we be sure that our solar system, the stars and the galaxies of which we know are not a part of an overall bigger system? May be that millions and billions years of the existence of the universe known to us are equivalent to just a part or just a day of an overall season. May be that the present season of life is to be followed by another season of silence and dullness, and thereafter once again the entire system including our solar system, the stars and the galaxies will acquire a new lease of life in some other form.

The Prophets have told us on behalf of Allah of an all round destruction and silence followed by a new life and the Resurrection of the dead under a new system. As we are sure of their truthfulness, we believe what they have said is true, including what they have said about the universal renewal of life.

The Qur'an has cited an example of the system of life and death on the face of the earth so that we may regard it as a small specimen of the universal system of life and may not think that Resurrection is improbable and inconsistent with the total system of creation.

The Qur'an says that Resurrection is a renewal of life and the renewal of life is a thing of which a small specimen we see on the face of the earth. The Holy Prophet has said:

"When you see the spring, think much of Resurrection." In other words the spring is a specimen of Resurrection.

Rumi says:

"Spring time after the falling of leaves from the trees is a proof of the Resurrection. Fire, air, clouds, water and sun dispel many illusions. In the spring season many mysteries are unveiled. The earth springs up what it has absorbed."

There are so many Qur'anic verses which cite the existing system of life and death as an evidence:

"Allah it is who sends the winds and they raise a cloud; then We lead it to a dead land and revive therewith the earth after its death. Such is the Resurrection." (Surah Fatir 35 : 9)

"You see the earth barren, but when We send down water thereon, it does thrill and swell and put forth every lovely kind of growth. That is because only Allah is the Truth. He brings the dead to life. Surely He is Able to do everything. And surely the Hour will come. There is no doubt about that. And Allah will surely raise those who are in the graves." (Surah al-Hajj 22:5-7)

There are many other verses which consider Resurrection a part of the system of life and death prevailing in the universe. We see a small specimen of Resurrection ourselves on the face of the earth. Here we confine ourselves to quoting two verses only. These verses differ from the verses of the first set in as much as these verses do not exclusively rely on Allah's ability. They also cite a specimen resembling Resurrection to show that in the perceptible world also Allah's Power has been manifesting itself on the same pattern.

The third group of verses describe the Resurrection as inevitable. Should there be no Resurrection, that would amount to something improper on Allah's part. This point has been elaborated in two ways:

(i) On the Basis of Divine Justice - Allah bestows on every creation of His what that creation deserves and what is befitting of that creation;

(ii) On the basis of Infinite Divine Wisdom - Allah has created everything for a purpose. The Divine wisdom requires that everything should be led to its appropriate perfection and target.

The Qur'an says that it would be a sort of injustice if there were no Resurrection, eternal life, ever-lasting bliss and Divine retribution, and injustice cannot be imputed to Allah because that would be contrary to the principle of Divine justice. It also says that if there was no eternal life the creation would be futile, and it is wrong to say that Allah does anything in vain.

There are so many verses in which return to Allah and eternal life have been described as inevitable and unfailing either because of Divine justice or because of Divine wisdom.

Here we quote verses from two surahs of the Qur'an in which the argument has been based either on Divine justice or Divine wisdom or both.

(i) The Holy Quran, after declaring that those who deviate from the right path and forget the Day of Reckoning will be severely punished, says:

"We created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. And woe unto those who disbelieve from the Fire. Shall We regard those who believe and do good works as those who spread corruption in the earth or shall we treat the pious as the wicked?" (Surah Sad, 38:27-28)

As we see, in the first one of these two verses the argument is based on Divine wisdom and sensibility of the creation and in the second verse it is based on Divine justice.

III. ***"Do those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall make them as those who believe and do good deeds, while their life and death is just the same? Bad is their judgement! And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and that everyone may be repaid what he has earned. And they will not be wronged."*** (Surah al Jathiyah, 45:21 - 22)

In the first of these two verse a reference has been made to the principle of justice and in the second to the principle of wisdom. Then in the second verse also Divine justice has been mentioned once again and described as the ultimate aim of the Resurrection.

Explanation: Here it is necessary to give an explanation as to how the two principles of Divine justice and Divine wisdom necessitate eternal life, and how it is that if we presume that the limited life of this world is not going to be followed by an eternal life, the creation of man cannot be justified, neither from the angle of Divine justice nor from that of Divine wisdom. Let us begin with Divine justice.

Divine Justice: Justice in its wider sense means to render everyone his due without any discrimination. As it is against justice not to give anyone his due, it is also against justice to make a discrimination in this regard and to give what is their due to some and not to give it to some others.

It would be injustice if a teacher at the time of examination gives to the students less marks than they deserve or gives to some of them as many as they deserve but gives to some other less.

Justice is in a way concomitant with equality, which means to treat all equally and not to believe in discrimination. Such an equality results in justice, that is giving everyone as much as is his due. But equality in giving in disregard of what is due and how much is due is

tantamount to injustice. Similarly equality in withholding is also contrary to justice. It is also objectionable to deprive all of what is due to them without any discrimination.

As such Divine justice means that the blessing of Allah is extended to every existing thing in accordance with the degree of its potential capacity and ability to receive it.

If any existing thing lacks some quality, that means that under the existing conditions it has not the capacity of possessing it.

We may further say that it would have been contrary to Divine justice if favours befitting their potential capacity were permanently withheld from any existing things. Justice requires that favours appropriate to and commensurate with their ability and merit should be conferred on all existing things without any discrimination.

Among existing things man has been furnished with a specially high degree of capacity and potentiality. Man is not motivated merely by his animal instincts and propensities. Animals have only those instincts which are related to their material life. On the other hand, man has, as we explained earlier, certain higher instincts also, which are of the level of eternity and not of this world.

Man has moral, scientific, aesthetic and religious motives. He accomplishes so many things under the impact of these motives, and sometimes even sacrifices his material and animal life for the sake of his high human objectives.

It is man who sets up, in the words of the Qur'an, his system of actions' on the basis of faith and good deeds, and aims at attaining eternal life and Allah's good pleasure. The idea of eternity and a desire to achieve it. His instincts push him in that direction.

All this indicates that man is capable of being eternal, and that his soul is not material. This means that in this world man is like an embryo. A foetus in the mother's womb is furnished with certain systems and faculties, such as respiratory system, circulatory system, nervous system, reproductive system, hearing system and the system of vision. But all these systems are in keeping only with the requirements of the post-natal world. They are not consistent with the temporary nine-month life of the womb.

It is true that in this world also man is benefitted by the system of faith and good deeds. But this benefit is of secondary importance. Actually this system is tantamount to a seed which can grow and bear fruit only in the happy eternal life. In other words, the real significance of this system is only in relation with the life of the other world.

Not only in the system of faith and good deeds man soars above nature and scatters the seeds of supernatural relations but also in the opposite system called by the Quran the system of

disbelief and wickedness his actions go outside the domain of natural calculations and physical needs, and acquire spiritual and eternal aspect, although in a devious way. Thus the disbelievers and the wicked also in a way become fit to attain eternal life, but unfortunately their eternal life brings to them pain and grief and in religious terms, consigns them to Hell.

If man does not move in the orbit of faith and good deeds, it is not that he confines himself to the orbit of the animals, but he falls below zero. In the words of the Qur'an such people are lower in rank and more erroneous than the animals.

Should there be no eternal life, those who work under the system of faith and good deeds and those who work under the opposite system will be like the students some of whom did their duty well and some of whom wasted their time in joking and gossip, but the teacher treated them all alike and gave no marks to anyone of them. This whole-sale depriving obviously is bad and against the principle of justice.

To explain this point in simpler terms it may be said that Allah has called people to faith and piety. Some people have accepted this call and modified their conduct, their way of thinking and their moral system accordingly. Some others have not responded to the call and have taken to evil-doing and corruption. But in this world we see no such system wherein all good deeds be rewarded and all wicked men be punished. Therefore there must be another world where the righteous and the wicked could be retributed according to their deeds. Otherwise, there can be no Divine justice.

Divine Wisdom: Our acts that is the acts of the human beings are of two kinds:

(i) Frivolous Acts, which are of no real advantage to us and are ineffectual in helping us attain the virtues latent in us; and

(ii) Wise and Rational Acts, which produce good results and help us attain the befitting virtues.

The first kind of acts are futile and meaningless and the second kind of acts are wise and judicious. As such our wise acts are those which lead us to a perfection befitting us. Now what about the wise acts of Allah? Are His wise acts also those which lead Him to perfection and His frivolous acts those which do not lead Him to perfection? No, that is not valid in the case of Allah, who is above all needs, wants and imperfections. Whatever He does is His favour, blessing and benevolence. He does not do anything to meet any need of His or to gain anything for Himself. His wise acts are those which lead any of His creation to a perfection befitting it. A futile act may be imputed to Him only in the sense that He may create something And may not lead it to a perfection befitting it. Thus the conception of wisdom in respect of Allah is different from that which applies to man.

Wisdom of man consists in his sagacity and his taking steps to advance towards human perfection. Wisdom of Allah consists in leading His creation to perfection befitting it or, in other words, creating things on the basis of pushing them to a goal befitting them.

As wisdom in so far as it concerns man, means his doing things with a view to achieve his own betterment, it is not necessary that there should be any real relationship between what he does and the result that he desires. In other words, it is not necessary that the desired result should be a natural consequence of his actions or that it should be regarded as the merit of his actions. For example, man makes so many useful things of clay, wood, stone, metal, leather, wool, cotton etc. and obtains sensible results. For instance, he makes a chair, a house, a motor car or some cloth. But a chair cannot be considered a merit of wood, nor a house a merit of stones, bricks and mortar, nor a motor car of a number of different metals used in its manufacture, for these stuffs themselves do not move towards their final forms and shapes. Of course, the results which man obtains from these products such as sitting on the chair, living in the house, moving in the car or wearing the clothes may be regarded as his merit or at least something useful to him.

In the case of Allah, on the other hand, there exists a real and natural relationship between His action and the results which they produce. In other words, the result of every action of His is really a merit of that action. As we see, every seed and every grain in this world moves itself to its goal and its best form.

Now the position is that this world and everything in it is unstable and liable to a change. Any final shape of anything which we may take into consideration is not final, and is liable to a change in its turn. In other words, everything is temporary, transient and will come to an end. All stages of nature are halting places on the way and none of them is the final destination.

From here some people have got the idea that the creation has no definite purpose or plan. The world is a caravan which is always on the move, going from one stage to another. Obviously a journey can be meaningful only if it has some destination in view. A journey can have no meaning if all destinations are no more than halting places and there is no possibility of finally reaching anywhere. As every existence in the world is followed by its non-existence and every construction is followed by its destruction, the whole system governing the world is nothing but a bewilderment and a repetition of what has already been repeated. Thus the whole system of life and existence is based on frivolity.

The Qur'an's reply is that this specious argument would have been correct if there had been this world alone, all births had ended in death and the fate of all that grew and bloomed had been to dry up and vanish. But such a view is short sighted and based on the presumption that life is confined to this world, while the fact is that life is not so confined. This world is the First Day. It will be followed by the Last Day. As Imam Ali has put it, *this world is the abode of passing and the next world will be the abode of staying*. It is the next world which gives a

meaning to the present world. It is the next world which is the destination and which gives a meaning to the motion and the hustle and bustle of this world.

Had not there been the next world, which is eternal, there would have been no final destination, this world would have been a sort of labyrinth, and the creation, in the words of the Qur'an, would have been in vain, futile and a mere pastime. But the Prophets have come to remove any doubts in this respect and to acquaint us with the truth, the ignorance of which would have made the entire world meaningless in our eyes. With the fixation of this idea of frivolity in our minds, our own existence becomes meaningless and to no purpose. One effect of the belief in the next world is that it delivers us from thinking that our existence has no purpose and gives a meaning to our selves, our thinking and our life.